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Creature Feature

Beaver Beneath the Ice



Although you may not see them as you wander the trails, you can be assured the beavers of Chippewa Nature Center are awake and active this winter.

Beavers do not hibernate in the winter; instead they adapt their behavior to deal with the cold, icy conditions.

A beaver's lodge is constructed out of logs, limbs, and mud piled together on an island or along the bank of a pond, lake, or stream. It has at least two underwater entrances and one ventilation hole in the roof. There is one main room in the lodge lined with dry grasses and shredded bark. Even when the outside temperature is well below freezing, the temperature in the lodge remains above freezing.

Beavers enjoy a diet of twigs, bark, leaves, and aquatic plants. If the ice is not yet solid on the pond, beavers will sometimes venture on to land to harvest fresh wood. However, if the pond is iced over, they feed from a stockpile of branches and logs they have stored underwater near their lodge.



Beaver Bits

An average beaver weighs between 35 and 40 pounds, although they can tip the scales at 60 pounds.



In the winter, up to eight beaver may share a lodge. Parents, who mate for life, share the lodge with their offspring from the previous two summers.

The coarse guard hairs and thick undercoat coupled with waterproof oils keep the beaver warm and dry even in icy water.

Beaver can spend up to 15 minutes under water. They have a membrane behind their teeth that prevents water from entering their mouths when carrying wood under water.

You can see evidence of beaver activity at Chippewa Nature Center around Six Island Pond and Wood Duck Pond.

Visit the Visitor Center Trailer for program information.