

# Habitat Conservation Area

## *A Self-Guided Interactive Tour Activities*

### BEAVER LODGE

Continuing down the path from the phragmites you will notice an old home of a toothy friend on the left, the beaver. These aquatic mammals with large webbed hind feet for swimming and hand-like front paws for manipulating objects, weigh in at 45 to 60+ pounds, making them the largest rodent in North America.

The lodge on the left, you will notice is made of branches, twigs, mud and rocks. Beavers make two main structures, a dam and a lodge. A dam is a structure built to block a river, stream or creek, whereas a lodge is used for a home and will contain two underwater tunnels that lead from the chamber to the pond so that beavers avoid being spotted by predators upon exit. The walls of their lodge are very strong due to the layers of mud and sticks and extremely insulated which is helpful in the winter months.

Beavers are fascinating creatures with interesting adaptations and traits. For example, did you know that in order to efficiently move in and out of the water with clear sight, Beavers have developed two eyelids? The first eyelid acts as a traditional eyelid, keeping the eye moist and clean, just like our own. The second eyelid is transparent and acts like a built-in pair of goggles.

Beavers also have naturally oily and waterproof fur due to a gland that produces castor oil. They spread the castor oil all over their bodies to help with waterproofing, allowing them to stay dry and warm as they enter and leave the water.

Similar to other rodents and rabbits, Beaver teeth never stop growing which is why you often see beavers gnawing on wood. They use wood as a food source, for building their lodges and dams, and for simply filing down their teeth (similarly to how we file our nails). An example of this can be seen on the right side of the pathway across from the beaver lodge, where there is a tree with MANY tooth indentations and grooves.