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Stevens Point Journal

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Two beavers swim across a pond on the property of Jim Hoffman, CEO of Hoffman Construction, on Oct. 25, 2024, in Alma Center. Hoffman is building a series of artificial beaver dams on a wooded property he owns that also hosts a cranberry farm and hunting lodge. JOE TIMMERMAN/WISCONSIN WATCH

How should Wisconsin contend with beavers?

Wildlife advocates, managers debate how to coexist

Bennet Goldstein
Wisconsin Watch

The proceedings of a state beaver committee have attracted the attention of both advocates and wildlife managers across the country. The group is developing recommendations for the next decade of beaver policy in Wisconsin — a state whose trapping program has been accused of resting atop fishy foundations.

Researchers and conservationists serving on the advisory committee —

primarily composed of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff, federal and tribal representatives, and members from environmental and trade groups — are urging Wisconsin wildlife regulators to shift longstanding beaver management policies that frame the critters as a nuisance species.

The call to reevaluate the state's beaver strategy comes as the Upper Midwest increasingly experiences the destructive impacts of climate change like droughts and flooding. Even wildfires, endemic to the American West, are now creeping eastward.

Beavers could present an opportunity, as the wetlands they create are more resilient to fluctuations in the ecological conditions that threaten plants and ani-

mals.

"There are a lot of problems that beavers cannot touch, and there are a lot of things that are solely our responsibility," said University of Minnesota ecohydrology professor Emily Fairfax, who has helped review several state beaver management plans. "But beavers can fix a lot, and beavers can be our partners if we let them in the places we need them."

Wisconsin, like other states, contracts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's wildlife services program to remove beavers and their dams each year. In 2024, the USDA killed nearly 2,800 beavers in Wisconsin, second

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PORTAGE COUNTY INSPECTIONS

Cat found in kitchen, employee without hair tied

Karen Madden

Stevens Point Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

The following are the latest results of Portage County Health Department inspections on licensed food establishments and other types of businesses, which the Stevens Point Journal reports monthly.

Custer

- JR's Saloon, 7404 Portage County Z: Feb. 4: One violation: Insecticide spray stored near ware washing sink.

Junction City

- Brian & Wendy's Hiawatha, 817 Main St.: Feb. 25: No violations.

Mosinee

- Funny Farm Bar & Grill, 4198 Portage County X: Feb. 10: Four violations: Consumer advisory on menu missing asterisk next to the food items that advisory applies to; no Wisconsin certified food manager for establishment; door gasket for upright freezer not intact; handwashing sink in kitchen not equipped with a hands-free operated faucet.

Plover

- El Molcajete Mexican Grill, 1160 Meridian Drive: Feb. 18: Two violations: No test kit for checking chlorine concentrations; hose line for the bar handwashing sink leaks slightly.
- Naughty Eggrolls, 1541 Ojibwa Lane: Feb. 28: No violations.

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Missing Necedah kangaroo found

Jamie Rokus

USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

NECEDAH — Just before noon on Saturday, March 28, the owner of Sunshine Farm petting zoo in Necedah shared "the best news of the day," as one commenter described it. Chesney, the runaway kangaroo from central Wisconsin, had been found.

"We have Chesney. We are on our way home," a post on the petting zoo's Facebook page said. Marland promised to share more details about Chesney's capture as well.

Chesney had been missing from his Necedah home for more than 72 hours when he was found. He had escaped an enclosure at his home around 11:15 a.m. March 25 after he became frightened by some unknown dogs, his owner Debbie Marland previously told a USA TODAY

NETWORK-Wisconsin reporter.

Chesney scaled an enclosure wall and hopped over a fence, eluding capture multiple times in the following days as his owner, drone operators and the community continued to search for him. He was spotted several times throughout the search, including early Saturday morning when a group of eight searchers split up into groups of two in a circle around the kangaroo.

"Unfortunately, Chesney had other plans and was way quicker than us," Marland shared on the Facebook page early Saturday. "We came real close. One of the people dove onto him, and he snuck out of the grip."

Chesney's story quickly spread across the country

News of Chesney's capture quickly

"(Chesney and his brother) bring so much joy and love to the community. They're wonderful animals."

Debbie Marland
Chesney's owner

spread with Marland's post receiving over 2,500 reactions and over 500 comments in less than an hour.

Chesney's story also was shared by news and entertainment outlets across the country including People magazine and TMZ, with most highlighting the baby kangaroo's denim diaper he was wearing in pictures on the petting zoo's Facebook page. Although Marland said

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Chesney the kangaroo was captured just before noon on March 28, and was on his way home. He had been missing from his Necedah, Wisconsin, home for more than 72 hours as his owner, drone operators and the community searched for him.

PROVIDED BY DEBBIE MARLAND

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