

## Beavers Making Due for the Winter

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A walk around Royal Lake yields an up-front look into the life of beavers. At the north end of the lake sits a beaver's lodge on what is now known as "Royal Lake Island" due to the sediment that has deposited over the years.

During the summer, the island was full of trees, but recently, the handiwork of the beavers has become quite evident. Most of the woodland that the beaver cleared are black willow—a favorite of beaver. The good news is the fast-growing willow actually does better with beaver browsing to remove the older growth. Next spring, the stumps will send new shoots, which will further feed the beaver. There will most likely be more food than they can eat. Beaver rarely go after slow growing trees, and when they do, they focus on one or two at a time. They eat the bark but will also use the wood as "lumber" for dams and lodges.

With the seasonal change and leaves gone, you can get a clear view of the lodge without having to get close to it, either from the trail or the blacktop at Lakeside Park. Beaver are nocturnal and the best time to try to catch a glimpse prior to the park closing is at dusk.

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