



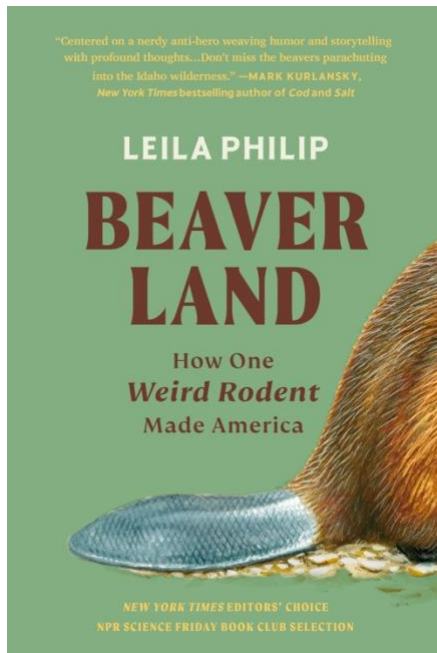
PRESS RELEASE

Despite a Disappointing Supreme Court Decision on Wetlands, Author Finds Much to Celebrate When it Comes to Beavers

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Acclaimed Book Soon to be Available in Paperback with New Afterword!



The *Washington Post* called her book “fascinating,” the *Wall Street Journal* said it was “full of charm and wonder,” and the *New York Times* called it “inspiring”—but what makes author Leila Philip most happy is the book’s impact on beavers.

“The movement to bring beavers back to North America has grown in the past sixteen months since the book first went to press,” she writes in a new afterword to the trade paperback edition of **BEAVERLAND: How One Weird Rodent Made America** (Twelve, January 30, 2024, \$19.99 trade paperback, 9781538755204).

“Beaver believers’ are moving from the fringe into the mainstream,” Philip continues. “Government agencies, federal and state employees, tribal governments, and state legislators are joining nonprofits, scientists, individuals, ranchers, farmers, and other landowners in new partnerships with the shared goal of harnessing what beavers do to help restore river systems and create watershed resiliency.”

“Beavers have this great new role to play because they can help us with every environmental problem we have that’s being accelerated by climate change.”

—Leila Philip on [CBS Sunday Morning](#) 9/17/23

This hopeful message is written against the backdrop of the May 2023 Supreme Court decision adopting a new standard for deciding which wetlands and waterways are entitled to protection

under the 1972 Clean Water Act. “The decision seems nothing short of delusional,” Philip laments. “To only protect the visible waters of a river system is as foolish as thinking that skin care will save your life.”

Yet, beavers provide part of the author’s hope for the future. In the new afterword and elsewhere, she describes

- Passed legislation in Oregon that removes the “predatory” status of beavers.
- A California state initiative that harnesses beavers’ natural abilities to help protect biodiversity.
- The Developing Alternative Mitigation Systems (DAMS) for Beavers Act that has been put forth in Congress and supported by over eighty organizations and tribes.
- The growth of the nonprofit Beaver Institute, creating financial incentives for farmers willing to support beaver wetlands.
- The filing of an intent to sue the federal government and the state of Wisconsin this past June by the Superior Bio Conservancy over its outdated beaver plan.
- Efforts underway to quantify the economic values of the ecosystem services that beavers provide. In a 2021 study, for instance, researchers at the University of Wisconsin calculated that within 25 years, the return of beavers to the Milwaukee watershed could create 1.7 trillion gallons of storm water storage annually valued at \$3.3 billion.

These developments provide evidence that “the light bulb is turning on,” Philip writes. “We are coming to grips with the ecological consequences of our long history of ecological abuse in the ways we have used our water.”

Through history and contemporary storytelling, **BEAVERLAND** highlights how this amazing animal has played an outsized role in American history and how it can impact the future. Beginning with the early trans-Atlantic trade in North America, Philip traces the beaver’s profound influence on our nation’s early economy and feverish western expansion, which gave the country its first corporations and multi-millionaires. Through her personal narrative in search of contemporary beavers, their advocates, and their foes, what emerges is at once ecological history, call-to-action, and a startling portrait of the contemporary fur trade. All together it tells one of the greatest conservation stories of the 20th century.

In an interview or talk, Philip could discuss the following along with the items listed above:

- Beavers’ outsized historical and contemporary impact on both our economy and our ecosystem.
- How the work beavers do is being harnessed throughout the country to restore stream systems, to repair drought ravaged grasslands for ranchers and farmers alike.
- How beavers are a regional North American Climate Action plan, already being put to use— to help us face the urgent challenges of our changing climate by mitigating damage from flooding, wildfire, and drought at a fraction of the cost of engineered solutions.

- The human challenges of coexisting with beavers who often bring water where humans either also wish to live or have built infrastructure -- and the new coexistence strategies being developed and refined with increasing success.
- The challenge of returning rivers to their natural state and learning to live with the ways beavers are part of the cycle of water.

“We urgently need to reset our relationship with the natural world,” Philip concludes in her new afterword. “The underlying connections that we cannot see, the increased flow of water through the land and the increased connection between water and land through the beaver damming complex and the start of canals has initiated biologic, ecologic, hydrologic and geomorphic processes that we are only beginning to understand.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leila Philip is the author of award-winning books of nonfiction that chronicle diverse, personal journeys. In *The Road Through Miyama*, Philip, already fluent in Japanese and a potter, traveled to Japan to apprentice to a master potter in southern Kyushu. *A Family Place: A Hudson Valley Farm, Three Centuries, Five Wars, One Family*, took her much closer to home (literally), and weaves the history of the Hudson valley farm where she spent her childhood with a revealing account of what’s involved in cultivating orchards. Both books received awards, and glowing national reviews. A Guggenheim Fellow, Leila has also been awarded fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. She works across genres, publishing poetry, essays and theatrical script and is currently at work on a documentary film. She was a popular contributing columnist at the *Boston Globe* and teaches in the Environmental Studies Program at the College of the Holy Cross where she is a professor in the English Department, where she holds the Brooks Chair in the Humanities.



BEAVERLAND
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By Leila Philip

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