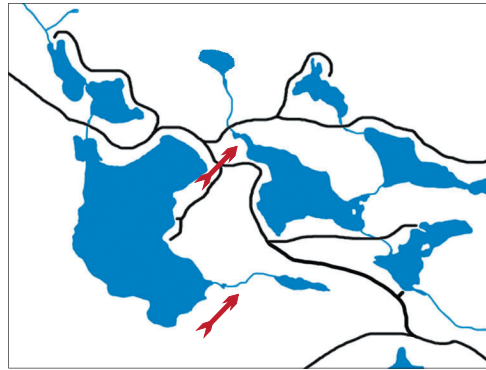


Limberlost, with its three distinct drainage systems and numerous feeder rivers and streams, has many ideal locations for beavers to build their dams.



The most extensive areas of beaver activity exist along the Kalonga Valley wetlands which lie south of Helve Lake, and the McReynold Valley on the west side of Lake Solitaire.

The Kalonga River drains the valley flowing westward into Lake Solitaire. The valley is unique in that it has for many years had twelve or more active beaver dams at any point in time.

By flooding streams, beavers create reservoirs of water and then much later, when they abandon their dams, they leave behind rich meadows and often extensive wetlands which have an important part to play in a balanced ecosystem.

The Kalonga Valley wetlands are the headwaters for a series of lakes, starting with Lake Solitaire and including Clear, Turtle, Rebecca and Bella Lakes.

The McReynold Valley drains the west side of Solitaire from Fowler and Eastall Lakes through extensive wetlands populated by beaver activity. The valley drains into the Boyenne River which crosses Millar Hill Road and eventually flows into Lake of Bays.

The east side of the reserve drains from High Lake down a valley with steep sides and five lakes with few wetlands and beaver

dams. There are, however, a few bank beavers active in the area.

Wetlands perform the key ecological function of filtering out harmful impurities from runoff water and dealing with excess nutrients.



Wetland at the north end of Turtle Lake

Wetlands also store water when the surrounding lands are unable to absorb a heavy rainfall or when a rapid spring runoff occurs.

Water trapped in the wetlands is slowly released down streams and into underground aquifers to resurface through springs at lower elevations or directly into lakes.



Beaver activity on the Wetland Trail in the Kalonga Valley

Canada is considered fortunate to have nearly 25% of the world's wetlands, which is one of the reasons that it is exceptionally well endowed with fresh, clean water year round.

The Kalonga Wetlands rank among the most diverse and accessible wetlands in the Algonquin region. This makes them an ideal laboratory for students to conduct biological and environmental studies.