

# The Grand Dam



Photo taken by Hugo

Beavers are considered a *keystone species* because of how much they can modify their own environment. The entire ecosystem will change because of it (Beaverdam.info). A beaver dam is different than its' lodge. The dam protects beavers from other predators too. They are notorious for their dams that they build along wetlands, rivers, near streams, lakes and ponds. The size of a dam varies but usually average about 15 ft long and 4-6 ft high (Beaverfacts.com). The longest beaver dam in the world was discovered by accident by Jean Thei in Wood Buffalo National Park that is in Canada. It was actually found by accident while he was doing Google Satellite imaging to study environmental changes. The dam is 2,790 ft long. It has several lodges and is estimated to be several decades old because of new and old growth around some of the lodges surrounding the dam (Thei, Jean, 2007).

# The Lodge



Photo taken by Seney Natural History Association  
National Park



Beaver Lodge in Wood Buffalo  
Photo taken by Ansgar Walk

The beaver's lodge is where they actually live and bring their gathered food. They start building their lodge in the fall by using mud, sticks, rocks, grass, leaves and whatever else they are able to gather. The only access into the lodge is beneath the water line which will protect them from predators. They are unique in structure and have an entry tunnel and two chambers. One chamber is where they sleep and take care of their kits. The other chamber is used for eating and coming in and out of the den. Interestingly their chambers are also stacked (Yellowstone National Park, 2014).