Name:_____

Nature's Busy Engineers: Beavers

Have you ever seen an animal that can completely change the land around it? Beavers are famous for being some of nature's greatest builders. These hardworking mammals spend their lives building dams, lodges, and ponds that benefit both themselves and many other living things.

Built for the Water

Beavers have special physical features that make them expert swimmers and woodcutters. They have large, flat tails shaped like paddles. A beaver uses its tail to steer through the water and slaps the surface of the pond to warn its family of danger. Beavers also have webbed back feet that push them quickly through streams. Their long front teeth never stop growing, which allows them to chew through tough tree trunks and heavy branches without wearing their teeth down.



Special physical features make beavers good swimmers.

Master Builders of the Forest

Beavers are best known for building wooden dams across flowing rivers and streams. First, they chop down small trees and branches with their teeth. Next, they pile the wood together with mud and stones across the water. This blocks the stream and creates a calm, deep pond. In the middle of the pond, beavers build a dome-shaped home called a lodge. The lodge has underwater entrances that keep predators, such as wolves and bears, from getting inside.

Helping the Environment

Beaver dams do much more than provide a safe place for beavers to live. The calm ponds created by dams form brand-new habitats for fish, frogs, ducks, and turtles. Plants around beaver ponds help filter soil and clean the water as it flows downstream. During dry summer weather, these ponds hold extra water that keeps surrounding trees and plants green, healthy, and growing.

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Name:_____

1. Which TWO details from the section "Built for the Water" support the main idea that beavers have physical features suited for swimming?

A. They build dome-shaped homes called lodges in the middle of deep ponds.

B. Webbed back feet help push them quickly through moving streams.

C. They use paddle-shaped tails to steer while swimming through water.

D. Predators like wolves and bears cannot enter underwater doors.

E. Deep ponds hold extra water during dry summer weather.

2. Part A

What is the main idea of the section "Helping the Environment"?

A. Beaver dams trap soil and keep stream water running fast.

B. Beaver activity creates helpful water habitats and benefits other living things.

C. Beavers build strong dams using a mix of mud, rocks, and branches.

D. Beaver ponds provide a safe area for beavers to hide from larger animals.

Part B

Which detail from the section best supports the answer to Part A?

A. Beaver dams do much more than provide a safe place for beavers to live.

B. First, they chop down small trees and branches with their teeth.

C. The calm ponds created by dams form brand-new habitats for fish, frogs, ducks, and turtles.

D. The lodge has underwater entrances that keep predators... from getting inside.

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