

A few days later, my wife and I were walking along the fire road that crosses Mr. Beaver's pond. We continued on through the forest for about thirty minutes, and then returned on the same route. As we neared the pond, an Alder tree fell towards us. Fortunately it hung up in some other trees, or it would have hit us. We dashed down to where we could look into the ponds, just in time to see the broad back of Mr. Beaver clamber over the lower dam. He paused for a second to look back at us, and I swear I could see his whiskers twitch in amused triumph!

Most confrontations after that were at a distance, with threatening snaps of Mr. Beaver's jaws. However, I am certain that it was "Mr. Beaver who tried to tip over my canoe one day as I left the shore to fish in the big pond. I have no witnesses, but in my own mind I am sure it was he.

More recently there has been another manifestation of the beaver temperament. Instead of tending to his dams, Mr. Beaver is now pursuing a latent talent for sculpture. I first noticed a 6 inch diameter cherry stump which had been enhanced by Mr. Beaver to resemble the head of a dog, or was it a beaver, or was it possibly a caricature of me? Mr. Beaver might be into beaver voodoo, where he does unspeakable things to my sculpted representation. I doubt that this is the case, however, as he has sculpted the head of a bird from a Douglas fir stump. There is another dog/beaver head out in the pond where I cannot get to it and I suspect there are other works of art that I have not yet discovered.

If anyone who reads this story has any suggestions on how to dissuade the budding Mr. Beaver-Sculptor from pursuing an artistic career I would be interested in hearing from you. The dams are sadly in need of Mr. Beaver's attention.

Earl Ingebright, and his son David, are the owners and managers of the Valhalla Tree Farm in Snohomish County, Washington.

On September 21, 2016 Earl celebrated his 99th Birthday. He now resides in a retirement village in Granite Falls, and visits the tree farm on a regular basis. More information about the Valhalla Tree Farm can be found at www.valhallatreefarm.com

