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Angry Beavers Retaliate Against River Rehabilitation near Moscow

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Yelena Kirichok / Facebook

A colony of beavers north of Moscow has struck back against local urbanization efforts by chewing down newly planted trees after their dams were destroyed in a river rehabilitation program, local activists have said.

The Moscow region's environmental authorities plan to spend 500 million rubles ($7.5 million) over the next three years to clean a 12-kilometer stretch of the Yauza River in the district of Mytishchi. It is one of nine regional waterways the authorities expect to rehabilitate at a cost of $35 million by 2023.

A family of seven Mytishchi beavers was left "hungry and destitute" this fall after the reclamation project removed their lodges and the plants that they eat, local resident Yelena Kirichok wrote on Facebook.

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“Now, the beavers walk along the shore at night and ‘cut’ trees that were planted there for show,” she said in her post on Sunday.

Last week, a senior Moscow region official promised Mytishchi residents that local beavers would be unharmed in the Yauza River environmental cleanup.

“The animals won’t be harmed. The contractor has been warned, its equipment will avoid beaver lodges,” Alexander Kogan was quoted as saying by the regional 360TV broadcaster after inspecting the area on Wednesday.

Following reports that the beavers were left hungry this week, regional environmental authorities have sought to reassure residents that the beaver family is not under threat.

“It was known that the family of seven beavers lived at one of the sections of the river when preparing for the rehabilitation project and the contractors took note of it,” they said in a statement Tuesday.

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