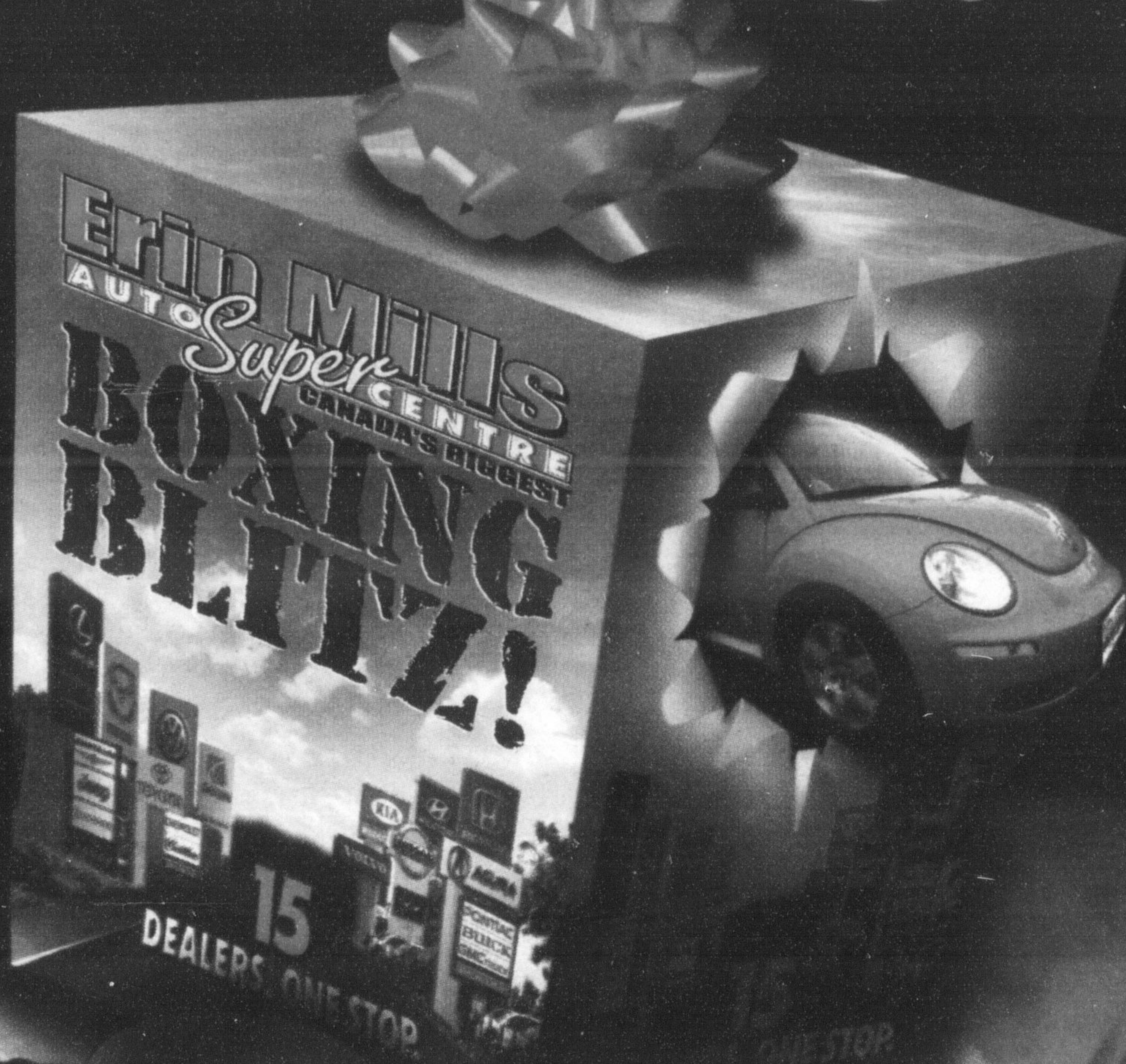


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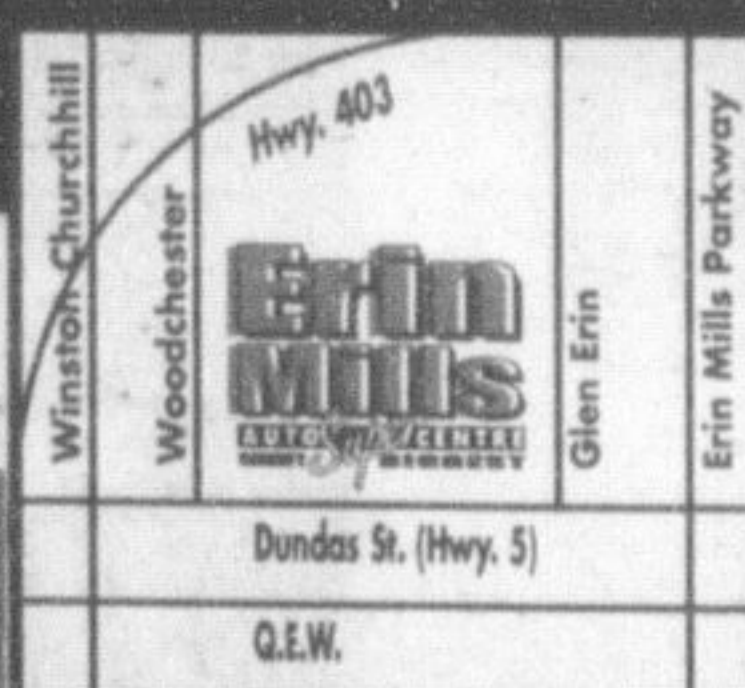


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CH traps disruptive beaver trio at Kelso

Animals disturbing trout spawning area

By **Melanie Hennessey**
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Conservation Halton (CH) recently trapped a trio of beavers who were causing problems in the waterway at Kelso Conservation Area.

The animals — which were caught in traps designed to kill — had built a dam in Sixteen Mile Creek that was destroying a habitat necessary for rainbow trout spawning, said CH Director of Watershed Management Services Bob Edmondson.

"It's one of the best rainbow trout breeding areas along Sixteen Mile Creek, located between our (Kelso) dam and Third Sideroad," he explained. "We had the dilemma of trying to deal with the habitat of one over another."

He noted that if the dam had made the water level rise, anything along the shoreline would've been destroyed, making it all the more important to ensure there are no interferences in the water flow.

Relocation not viable

Edmondson explained the traps used, which were set out by a licensed trapper, were the most humane type of those meant to kill because they were quick and the beavers didn't suffer. He said CH didn't use live traps because it's very difficult to relocate beavers.

"There's nowhere to relocate them to without creating another problem," he said, noting the success rate for moving beavers is very low.

Ministry of Natural Resources conservation officer Aaron Barber shared similar sentiments. He said the problem with relocating beavers, particularly in Halton Region, is the high percentage of privately-owned land.

"You're taking the problem from one area and giving it to another person," he said.

He went on to say that CH was "totally justified" in what it did to fix the beaver problem.

But, at least one local resident had

"We had the dilemma of trying to deal with the habitat of one over another."

BOB EDMONDSON

some concerns with the trapping that was done.

Miltonian Vic Park discovered one of the traps in the water when he was out walking his dog off-leash last month at Kelso.

While neither he nor his dog was injured, he was still worried about what would've happened if a child had found a trap.

"They would lose an arm or a hand," he said. "We're not talking about something that's just a high risk to animals, but to children as well."

He was also worried that there were no signs alerting people to the traps.

Edmondson said CH does have a concern for the safety of those visiting its parks, but pointed out the traps were placed in the water in areas that are "off the beaten track," meaning they weren't on a trail.

He explained that people could've gone looking for the traps if signage had been put up to tell everyone they were there. Since the beavers have been caught, he said the traps have been removed.

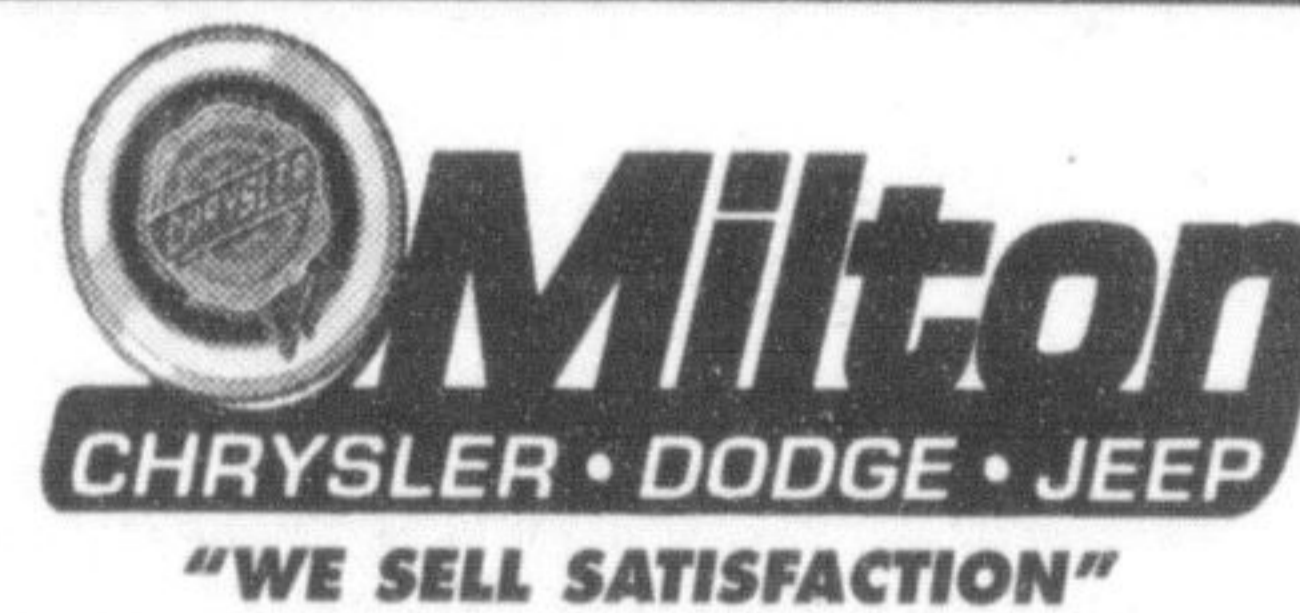
He also noted that dogs are supposed to be walked on a leash on CH properties.

Beavers are located throughout CH-owned lands. While it's the first time they've been known to build a dam in that location at Kelso, Edmondson said there have been similar cases at the Hilton Falls and Scotch Block dams.

He emphasized that CH's first approach is always to let the beavers be.

At this point, he said it's unknown if traps will have to be set out next year, noting it's only done if the dams are creating a problem.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com.



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