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From fires raging across Australia to floods sweeping Europe, many people are already affected by the symptoms of climate breakdown. Wildlife extinctions are soaring and still the forests are cleared and chimneys burn. With overwhelming scientific evidence, we all face a challenging future. And, sooner rather than later.

The spectre of ecological, economic and social collapse has shape-shifted from a global possibility to local reality. Our daily digest of social unrest, nature's destruction and mass migration is having a profound impact on our lives, our wellbeing, our families and friends. We are in an emergency. Simply put, we do not have the time to spend decades planning for a future that may never happen.

Nature restoration is urgent and is about people. We need to understand this new hothouse world and learn how to live in it together with the rest of the natural world that sustains us.

The challenge is considerable - to engage the minds and hearts and mobilise the hands of everyday people living on the land and in cities, from farmers, fishers, trappers and gardeners to policy makers, utilities and businesses. We must re-prioritise our needs and change behaviours, balancing individual hope and security with collective pragmatism and immediacy.

The humble and industrious beaver could be part of the solution as the figurehead of an international



campaign. As we will be hearing during BeaverCON, so much has already been learned in different states and countries in North America and Eurasia, from beaver ecology, hydrology and social impacts to management, policy frameworks and economic incentives.

This conference is about sharing our research, experience and stories, and looking forwards to the future. What can we do together to unite, replicate and scale all the hard work, creativity and, in many cases, bravery over recent decades? What can we do to help people to want to make space for beavers and the wildlife they bring, to learn to co-exist with their scruffy disruption and prodigious work, to allow rivers to breathe as living wetlands in headwaters and across floodplains?

In a time of ecological devastation, looming social unrest and potential economic collapse, we humans are in danger of being stifled by self interest, personal security, out-dated management, tribalism and protecting our patch (of land or expertise), even ecological grief. It is time to face the truth, whatever that might be, and shift the narrative from fear-fuelled stasis to a positive one of immediate and active recovery, collaboration and abundance.

Is it time for Beavers Without Borders?