The Roots of Vegetation Management

Unwanted vegetation can undermine the integrity of canal embankments and lead to maintenance difficulties and potential failures that could jeopardize lives and property

Erosion Impacts

Trees and woody vegetation can make an embankment susceptible to erosion by:

- Creating a seepage path for stored water or wastewater, which can lead to internal erosion
- Loosening compacted soils
- Penetrating cracks and joints in foundation rock, potentially leading to seepage

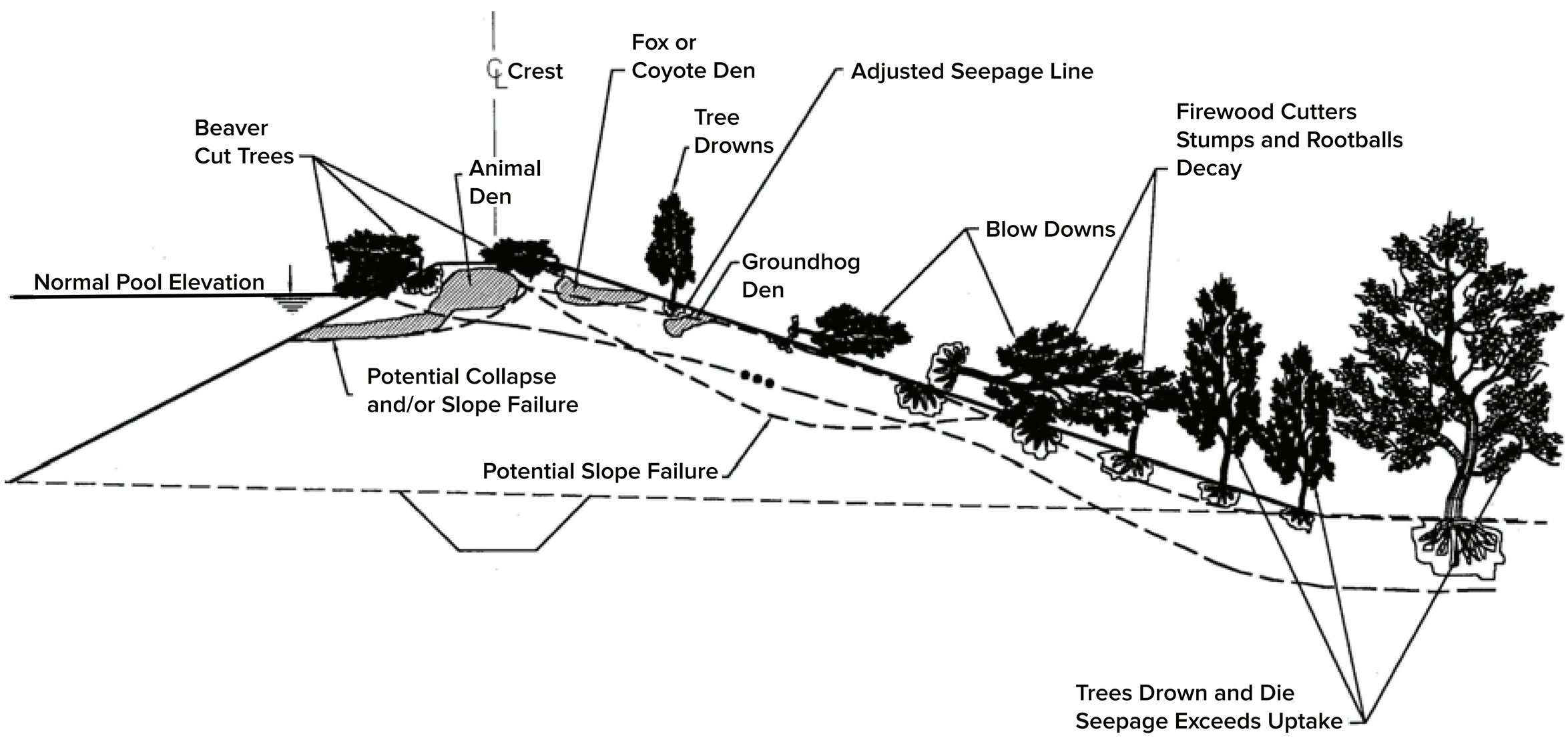
Embankment Inspection Benefits

Inspections are conducted to ensure the integrity of the embankment. They rely heavily on observation to determine seepage, cracks, slumps, and similar hazards and can be compromised by:

- Dense ground cover that obscures animal burrows and embankment defects
- Heavy vegetation that limits access to critical inspection areas

The Bottom Line

Guidance from FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers states embankments should be clear of vegetation to reduce the risk of embankment failure. The Canal Corporation will restore embankments to their intended design and increase safety on the Erie Canal for those who use it and live nearby.



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