Safe and Ethical Use of the Dryland Body-grip Trap in WI



Wisconsin Cooperative Trapper Education Program

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Wisconsin Trappers Association





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I. Introduction

This handbook will assist you with the decisions you must make while utilizing the body-grip trap for dryland sets. The information in the handbook has come from years of trapper research and experience. <u>NOT</u> using this knowledge and these systems will jeopardize the continued legal use of the body-grip trap on dryland. Our obligation to the future of trapping, to the species we pursue, and to society in general, is to be responsible, ethical and to utilize the most current technology. Your support and agreement to use these methods will contribute to that obligation.

The body-grip trap on dryland has many practical uses. Although research identifies a properly used body-grip trap as an efficient tool for trapping furbearers, improper use of such body-grip trap threatens the future of modern trapping. **This handbook provides dryland trapping systems for body-grip traps between 60 and 75 square inches.** These body-grip traps offer <u>NO</u> margin for error, therefore, it becomes <u>YOUR</u> responsibility to employ a system that protects and reduces the potential of a domestic or other non-target capture.

NOTE: Although required for traps between 60 and 70 square inches, the systems, or variations thereof described in this booklet can be used voluntarily with body-grip traps measuring less than 60 square inches.

The body-grip trap is an important and humane tool for trappers. Precautions must be taken at the trap site to insure the continued legal use of this tool. As responsible trappers, our actions must remain fluid to changes in both our landscape and in how people use our natural resources. Using care and skill will leave you with a sense of accomplishment for a job well done, rather than finding a domestic animal in a poorly placed or baited trap.

We have received support from a variety of conservation and resource groups. This support provides a foundation for a future that includes modern trapping. This handbook is being provided to all trappers, trapper education graduates, conservation wardens and wildlife biologists as a tool to increase proficiency and maintain trapper responsibility.

Use this handbook as a guide to protecting your sets on the trapline. Trappers are ingenious and modifications are encouraged, as long as the minimum requirements for restricted entry and trap recess are followed. Do not be intimidated by the restricted entries shown in this handbook. The furbearers targeted by these sets frequent smaller openings and enclosures in search of food. Proper set location and luring will achieve the needed results.

Trappers are held accountable for their actions while afield. Assessments will be completed at the close of future seasons to examine and need for regulatory changes. We look for your support and commitment to use these methods and systems. **The future of modern, regulated trapping depends on you!**

II. Terminology

Body-grip Trap - a steel trap designed to allow the animal's head, neck, or torso to enter the trap opening and he held by compression of the jaws when sprung.

Dryland Set - means a trap set or staked to be completely on dryland with no possibility of the trap or trapped animal to reach water that is not frozen. Dryland sets must be checked at least once each day and any captured animals must be removed from the set.

Enclosure - any devise that creates a barrier to the trap allowing entry only through designated openings.

Total Square Inches - Multiply the maximum width of the trap jaws (A) by the height of the trap jaws (B) to determine the maximum square inches of the unset trap. ****NOTE: Measurements must be taken when the trap is UNSET.**



Vertical Distance - To determine the vertical height of a body-grip trap, measure from the widest points on the outside of the jaws. ****NOTE:** Measurements must be taken when the trap is SET.



160 body-grip trap - body-grip series that commonly measures under 60 square inches. BE SURE TO MEASURE!!

220 body-grip trap - body-grip series that commonly measures between 60 and 75 square inches. BE SURE TO MEASURE!!

III. Specific Requirements for Body-grip traps between 60 and 75 square inches

This trap is an effective tool for a variety of furbearers, but requires special consideration because of the design and the jaw spread. Almost always, the firing of this trap on a furbearer results in a catch and kill situation. Accordingly, requirements exist for this specific trap to reduce the potential for a non-target catch. Compliance with these requirements will insure it's continued use.

In Wisconsin, it is **ILLEGAL** to set, place or operate a body-grip trap between 60 and 75 square inches as a:

1) Water set—unless at least one-half of the set trap is located underwater at all times;

2) Elevated set—unless the trap is placed at least 5 feet above the surface;

3) **Baited and/or scented set in or on the ground**—unless the trap trigger is within an enclosure that provides openings no greater than 50 square inches for a 7 inch recess; OR, an 8 inch height by 10 inch width opening with a 10 inch minimum recess from the enclosure openings;

4) **Unbaited and/or unscented trail set**—unless the trap trigger is within an enclosure that provides openings no greater than 10 inches in height and 10 inches in width and is recessed a minimum of 15 inches from the enclosure openings; or

5) **Bottom entry enclosure set**—unless the entire opening of the enclosure is no more than 7 inches above the surface.*

* The measurement to the surface is the distance to the first surface beneath the trap or opening, where the surface is ground, ice, crusted or packed snow or any other hard material.

IV. Site Selection for Body-grip Traps on Dryland

Trap site selection is a <u>critical</u> factor in the continued use of the dryland bodygrip trap! Utilize your scouting trips to not only evaluate available resources, but any necessary precautions that would help you to avoid a distressing situation. Acquire <u>landowner permission</u>, be <u>responsible</u>, and use <u>common sense</u> in choosing all set locations. Public criticism reflects on all trappers, not just on one individual.

An evaluation must be made of every proposed trap site to minimize the potential of a non-target catch. Trappers must first determine where furbearers such as raccoon, skunk, opossum, and fisher hunt or forage for food. Intercepting furbearers between denning and feeding areas is generally productive. Scouting trips are invaluable to finding these areas and then deciding if there are factors that would make them inappropriate set locations. Inappropriate set locations are <u>"Red Zones"</u> and need to be avoided. Examples of red zones are -

<u>Roadways</u> - Roads were built to move people from one point to another. There is an increased use of roads by bicyclists, skaters, joggers, and folks just out for a walk. Placing sets adjacent to roadways increases the potential for conflict. Not only are trap sets visible in these locations, but an accompanying pet may work the set and cause a distressing situation for everyone involved.

<u>Trails on public lands</u> - Depending on the time of year and weather, these trails are used for hiking, birdwatching, exercise or hunting. Regardless of which, these activities involve people who may be accompanied by their pet or hunting dog. Pre-season scouting and continual evaluation of non trapper use is required throughout the season. Distance yourself from these activity areas.

Fencelines that are property boundaries - While landowners permission may be granted for one side of the fence, the opposite landowner's views may differ. Adjacent landowners utilizing property opposite the fence may very well be accompanied by their pets or a hunter with a dog. A distressing situation may arise should a set which is attractive to domestic animals be placed too close to a boundary fenceline.

<u>Areas of human habitation</u> - These areas are extremely sensitive to conflict. Societal changes require that we distance our site selections from humans. Fur trapping is accepted as a rural activity utilizing undeveloped or uninhabited property. The general public does not believe fur trapping is needed in urban or suburban environments. Conflicts occurring in urban areas have a heightened response and often amplify an already emotional situation.

<u>Public lands</u> - We enjoy a myriad of public lands and each serves a variety of outdoor enthusiasts. Pets are a factor of human use and must be considered when frequenting these lands. Site specific seasonal evaluation is necessary before any set is made.

V. Bait, Scent and Lure Selection

Bait, scents and lures are an important part of your dryland body-grip trap system. Proper use is equally important as <u>site selection</u> and the <u>trap system</u> you choose for your dryland body-grip trap.

Any of the selected baits, scents or lures can be made at home or purchased from trapping supply dealers. Regardless of what is used, **<u>consideration</u>** and **<u>common sense</u>** must be used to trap only targeted animals. For example, using sweet baits during the first few weeks of season coincides with the available diet of raccoons, while not appealing to a hunting canine. Later as temperatures drop and a louder, more profound lure is needed, a switch to fish paste or shellfish baits may be appropriate. A canine may be interested in these odors, but your proper selection of **<u>trap site</u>** and **<u>trap system</u>** will reduce the potential for a non-target catch.

The use of meat, whether a red meat like venison, beaver or muskrat or a white meat like poultry and fish must be considered carefully. Research indicated that these types of baits are very appealing to canine and result in most conflicts. **Restricted entry** or **elevated trapping systems** must be used when utilizing this type of bait.

You must be the risk manager. Consider and select a lure, bait or scent that matches the natural forage of the target animal based on time of year, temperature, prevailing wind currents and weather conditions. The most important factor is avoiding a bait which will cause a non-target animal to work your set.

Target animal lures, trailing scents and baits can be made with these materials, either separate or some components mixed together -

Cheez Whiz	Peanut Butter	Marshmallows	Crisco
Bacon Grease	Ground Fish	Sardines	Oysters
Syrup	Beaver Castor	Vaseline	Bakery
Trout Oil	Fish Oil	Molasses	Grain
Bar B Que Sauce	Honey	Vanilla	Liquid Smoke
Glycerin	Fruit or		
	Nut Extracts		

A variety of pre-made and commercially prepared products are available through reputable trapping supply dealers. Consultation with these industry suppliers can be invaluable and provide recommendations specific to your area.

"Wire Mesh Cubby"

This system works with either the 160 or 220 series body-grip trap. Materials and assembly are required prior to the start of the trapping season. This system is collapsible for transportation and storage, and works best for raccoon, skunk, opossum and fisher.

Tools required: Diagonal Wire Cutters, J Clip Tool (or hog ring pliers) and Tape Measure.

<u>Materials:</u> # 14 gauge wire mesh, with either 1 inch by 1 inch or 1 inch by 1 1/2 inch sized mesh.

For the 160 body-grip trap, cut four pieces 7 inches wide by 24 inches long and one piece 7 inches by 7 inches.

For the 220 body-grip trap, cut four pieces 8 inches wide by 24 inches long and one piece 8 inches by 8 inches.

Assembly: (See diagrams on page 6 and follow assembly instructions)

1. With four J clips (hog rings can be used in place of J clips), assemble two panels of wire mesh, edge to edge. Repeat this step for the other two panels.

2. Assemble the two panel sets together with eight J clips, four per side.

3. Attach the back panel with two J clips on what would be the top edge.

4. From the front, identify the center of both sides and cut the wires out creating a channel for the body-grip trap springs. For the 160 body-grip trap, cut the channel 7 inches long. For the 220 body-grip trap, cut the channels 11 inches long.

5. Assembly complete. When J clipping the panels together, leave the clip somewhat loose so the cubby can be flattened for storage.

6. When setting up for field use, move the back panel into position and secure n place with a small piece of #16 gauge wire.

7. Camouflage entire set with rocks, logs, brush, grass or branches to match the surrounding area.

Materials can be acquired from fencing or farm related stores.

"Wire Mesh Cubby"



This cubby allows the trapper many options for use. This enclosure can be used in elevated sets, running pole sets, inverted, or simply placed adjacent to furbearer habitat and travelways.



A trapper stabilizes the body-grip trap and the cubby with steel rerod stakes. The set is then baited and camouflaged to blend with the natural surroundings.



A trapper is blending this baited cubby with grass and natural vegetation adjacent to this small waterway. A call lure and bait natural to common furbearers is used.

"Wooden Cubby Box"

This trap system works with either the 160 or 220 series body-grip trap. Materials and assembly are required prior to the start of the trapping season. This system is bulky for transport and storage, and works best for raccoon, opossum, skunk and fisher.

Tools required: Hammer, Saw, Tape Measure, Screwdriver/Screwgun and Pencil

Materials: Wood and wire mesh.

For the 160 body-grip trap, cut four pieces of wood 3/4 inch by 9 inches by 24 inches and one piece of wire mesh 9 inches by 9 inches.

For the 220 body-grip trap, cut four pieces of wood 3/4 inch by 10 inch by 24 inches and one piece or wire mesh 10 inches by 10 inches.

Assembly: (See diagram on page 8 and follow assembly instructions)

1. Assemble the wooden box utilizing the two narrow boards as the sides and the two wider boards as the top and bottom. The top and the bottom must overlap the sides. Use a minimum of four screws per joint, spaced evenly down the sides.

2. Place the wire mesh on the back end of the box and secure in place with 3/4 inch poultry staples, using three per side.

3. From the front and centered, mark and cut out a channel 1 inch wide on each side of the box. The channels must be evenly spaced from the top to bottom, will be opposite each other, and are intended to accommodate the body-grip springs. For the 160 body-grip trap, cut the channels 7 inches long. For the 220 body-grip trap, cut the channels 11 inches long.

4. Small wooden lathe or blocks should be screwed to the bottom of the cubby if it is to remain out of doors year 'round. This prevents moisture from rotting the wooden box. Wrapping the cubby box with tar paper will also increase the life of the box.

5. At the trap site, camouflage the box with rocks, brush, grass or logs to match the surroundings.

Materials can be acquired from lumber or hardware related stores.

"Wooden Cubby Box"

Cut an 8 inch channel for a 50 square inch opening

Cut an 11 inch channel for an 8 inch by 10 inch opening.



SIDE VIEW



A trapper stakes the trap and enclosure down using rerod stakes. The trap is recessed 7 inches in this enclosure, so a restricted entry is created with wire mesh. A Fifty square inch opening is the rule with a 7 inch recess. A trapper blends this enclosure with the natural surroundings. The trap is recessed 10 inches in this enclosure. The opening of the enclosure measures 8 inches high by 10 inches wide.

"Plastic Culvert Pipe"

This trap system works with either the 160 or 220 series body-grip trap. Materials and assembly are required prior to the start of the trapping season. This system is bulky for transport and storage, and works best for raccoon, opossum, skunk and fisher.

Tools required: Tape Measure, Saw, Drill and Diagonal Wire Cutter.

Materials: Black plastic culvert and wire mesh.

Cut a piece of 10 inch diameter black plastic culvert 24 inches long and a piece of wire mesh 10 inches by 10 inches square.

Assembly: (See diagram on page 10 and follow assembly instructions)

1. Choose on end of the culvert to be the back. Drill four holes through the N, S, E and W sides of the culvert within 1/2 inch of the back edge.

2. Place the 10 inch by 10 inch wire mesh flat against the back of the culvert and secure the mesh to the culvert with four wire ties. Four small pieces of #16 gauge wire will serve the same purpose. Secure the wire ties tightly and snip the extra material with a wire cutters. Note: The square piece of wire mesh fastened to the back will prevent the cubby from rolling.

3. From the front, locate the seams on each side of the culvert. The seams will be opposite each other and travel the length of the culvert pipe. Using the seams as a guide, cut a 1/2 inch wide channel down each side of the culvert pipe a minimum of 7 inches long. Use the wire cutters to snip off the channel stock from the culvert. This channel will accommodate the body-grip trap springs.

4. At the trap sit, camouflage the set with rocks, branches, grass or brush to match the surroundings.

Materials can be acquired from farm or construction related stores.

"Plastic Culvert Pipe"





This trapper is demonstrating the staking system used with this trap and the enclosure. Trap and enclosure must be securely staked. This enclosure has been modified with wire mesh to create a restricted entry. The effectiveness of the 160 body-grip is outstanding, but also requires protection. A trapper blends the pipe set with the natural surroundings. Properly lured and baited, this system will effectively trap a variety of furbearers.

"Pail Stump"

This trap system works the 220 series body-grip trap. Materials and assembly are required prior to the start of the trapping season. This system is average in bulk for transport and storage and works best for raccoon.

Tools required: Tape measure, Saw, Drill, and Screwdriver.

Materials: Five (5) gallon or larger plastic pail and a small wooden block.

Assembly: (See diagram on page 12 and then follow assembly instructions)

1. Cut a side entrance hole in the bucket that measures 6 inches high and 7 inches wide.

2. Drill eight, 1/2 inch holes through the bucket where the handles once were.

3. Drill two, 1/2 inch holes through the bucket where the handles once were.

4. Drill a small hole through the base of the bucket to secure a cord with a 3 inch by 3 inch bait sponge.

5. Cut a 1 inch wide channel 6 1/2 inches long on each side of the bucket. The channels should be opposite each other and will be used to accommodate the body-grip springs.

6. Screw a 2 inch by 4 inch by 3 inch block of wood centered to the inside of the bucket 9 1/2 inches from the bottom of the bucket. A pinch bracket should be affixed to the block of wood to hold the body-grip in place when set.

7. Dye or paint the exterior of the bucket with an earthtone color.

8. At the trap site, blend the pail stump with the natural surroundings.

Materials can be acquired from lumber and hardware related stores.

"Pail Stump"



"Square Plastic Pail"

This trap system works the 220 series body-grip trap. Materials and assembly are required prior to the start of the trapping season. This system is average in bulk for transport and storage and works best for raccoon, opossum, skunk and fisher.

Tools required: Tape Measure, Drill and Saw.

<u>Materials</u>: Square plastic pail (10 inch by 10 inch opening) and a wire mesh panel measuring 10 inches wide and 30 inches apart.

Assembly: (See diagram on page 14 and follow assembly instructions)

1. Lay the square pail on it's side and drill two holes within 1/2 inch of the top edge of the bucket approximately 3 inches apart.

2. Cut two 1 inch wide channels on each side of the buckets two inches long. The channels should be opposite each other and will accommodate the body-grip trap springs.

3. Using the wire mesh, form a three sided enclosure measuring 10 inches in height and 10 inches in width. Affix the enclosure to the top edge of the bucket (previously drilled holes) with two small pieces of #16 gage wire or hog rings. Form and trim the wire enclosure at it's face to create an 8 inch height by 10 inch width entry.

4. Drill a 1/2 inch hole vertically through the back of the bucket. Use a rerod stake to secure the bucket (and bait) in place.

5. A "see through" set can be made by cutting the back of the bucket off and replacing it with wire mesh. Fasten the wire mesh with wire ties of #16 gauge wire to holes drilled through the bucket near the back edge.

6. Dye or paint the outside and earthtone color, and camouflage at the trap site to match the surrounding area.

7. Once baited or lured, place the trap inside the bucket and stake the trap system down. This also includes pinning the front of the enclosure down so that it cannot flip up and expose the body-grip trap.

Materials can be acquired from any number of lumber or hardware related stores.

"Square Plastic Pail"

Trim down wire to create an 8 inch high by 10 inch wide opening.





This enclosure is baited (bait stick at rear of bucket) and the trap is sercurely staked with rerod adjacent to a furbearer trail. The enclosure will now be camouflaged to match the surroundings. While not completely seen, the wire mesh front is pinned to the ground with rerod to prevent lifting. A trapper prepares an enclosure adjacent a waterway. The wire mesh front must also be secured with a rerod stake to prevent lifting by a non target animal.

"Blind Trail Set"

(Unbaited and Unscented)

This trap system works with either the 160 or 220 series body-grip trap. Materials and assembly are required prior to the start of the trapping season. This system is not a problem for transport or storage, and works best for raccoon, opossum, and skunk.

Tools required: Tape Measure, Diagonal Wire Cutter, and J Clip Pliers (or hog ring pliers).

Materials: #14 gauge wire mesh, with either 1 inch by 1 inch or 1 inch by 1 1/2 inch mesh.

For the 160 body-grip trap, cut two pieces 21 inches long (24 inches long if using this trap on a stabilizer in the ground) by 12 inches wide.

For the 220 body-grip trap, cut two pieces 24" long (30 inches long if using this trap on a stabilizer in the ground) by 15 inches wide.

Assembly: (See diagram on page 18 and follow assembly instructions)

1. Bend the wire panel into a three-sided frame. For the 160 body-grip trap, the three sides should equally measure 7 inches (or 8 inches if a stabilizer is used). For the 220 body-grip trap, the three sides should equal 8 inches (or 10 inches if a stabilizer is used). The depth of the frame will be 12 inches. Repeat for the second wire panel.

2. Secure the two panels together with two J clips (hog rings can be used in place of J clips) on the outside corners of the frame top. Do not overtighten as these clips serve as hinges.

3. Measure equally up each side of both frames and cut out a 5 inch channel for the 160 body-grip trap and 6 inches for the 220 body-grip trap. This will allow the body-grip trap to fire properly.

4. Once the blind set has been made with the body-grip trap, place the frame over the trap and enclose the entire trap with the mesh frame. Secure in place and camouflage with nearby materials.

Materials can be acquired from a variety of fencing or farm related retail stores.

"Blind Trail Set" NOT DRAWN or PHOTOGRAPHED TO SCALE





The trapper has staked the trap and the enclosure with rerod over this furbearer trail. The enclosure will be blended with the natural surroundings. The ends of the enclosure must be pinned to the ground to prevent lifting. The 10 inch height allows for a body-grip trap on a steel stabilizer.

The trapper blends the secured system with grass from the immediate area. This creates a protected travelway that is inviting to furbearers.

VII. Dryland Body-grip Trap Tips

* You can further restrict the opening of the trap set by weaving grass or using sticks around the opening. This will also prevent misfires due to "reaching" raccoon.

* Follow small game trails well away from human activity to choose a trap set location

* Elevating bait or lure in a cubby helps prevent consumption by small rodents.

* Use sweet baits and lures until there is a week of consecutive freezing temperatures or frost.

* Use seafood and fish related baits or lures late in the season when temperatures are at freezing or below.

* The body-grip trap must be stabilized and staked securely to prevent movement.

* Position the body-grip trigger to fire from pressure created by the bridge of the nose as the furbearer enters the trap set.

* Place bait or lure in the **back** of the cubby to insure a committed approach and catch.

* A line of miniature marshmallows in to the trap set makes a good trailing lure.

*For your safety, use a body-grip trap safety gripper when handling a set body-grip trap. Always have a body-grip trap setting tool at your side.

* Double check the trap set prior to departure to insure all precautions have been taken.

* Clean the trap site at the completion of your trapping activity. Whatever is brought to the trap site must leave the trap site.

* Tread lightly.

VIII. Groups Supporting Use of this Handbook









National Trappers Association, Inc.



A WISCONSIN ALLIANCE FOR RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT, INC.

Wisconsin Cooperative Trapper Education Program



Dept. of Natural Resources and the Wis. Trappers Association





Wisconsin Cooperative Trapper Education Program

The future of furbearer trapping in Wisconsin is secured through an educated public that understands the need for and value in wildlife management. This is accomplished through trained trappers familiar with modern and humane methods of animal restraint, as well as the proper handling of furbearers. The mandatory WCTEP program brings experienced and skilled trappers, trained and apprenticed in the trapper education program, into the classroom where they can share their knowledge and understanding with those interested. Classes are taught by certified instructor and available throughout the year. For more information on this safety program please visit:

http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/trap/

Program developed and administered by the Wisconsin Trappers Association and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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