

WTA General Membership Meeting

March 15, 2025

Le Sure's Hall Banquet & Catering, Oshkosh, WI 54904

Meeting Called to Order – President Scott Zimmermann @ 1:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call –

President – Scott Zimmermann, Vice President – Deb Koltis, Secretary – Scott Robb,
Treasurer - Russ Warmka, NTA Director – Scott McAuley, Personnel & Finance - Lee Sellars

10 districts have member representation during roll call. District 1 had no members present.
69 members were present as a quorum.

Reading of the WTA Mission Statement – Scott Zimmermann

Agenda Repair – Scott Zimmermann

NTA Director's Report and Secretary's Report

President Report – Scott Zimmermann

- Discussion regarding year-round raccoon season.
 - Objection based on quality of fur
 - Nuisance permits are available, no need for a year-round season.

Motion that the WTA stance is to reject a year-round, open raccoon season, by Chris Bezio, seconded by Brian Riske, motion passed unanimously.

- Other legislative questions –
 - Senate 23047, establishing a gray wolf season
 - Dispatch of animals in road right of way
 - Use 7 ½" traps for dryland trapping before December 1st for wolf trapping
 - Livestock Protection Act to remove wolves from the Endangered Species Act without judicial interventions.
 - Extending the bobcat season to February 15 from January 31
 - Two zones; 'harvest' is to be equal between the zones and periods, number of issued tags would not be equal between the periods and zones.
 - Extending the late season would be a longer eligibility wait to secure a tag for the late periods in both zones.
 - Fur quality

Motion: the WTA stance is to not extend the bobcat season annually, beyond January 31 made by Larry Meyer , seconded by Ralph Papesh, motion passed unanimously.

President Report (continued) – Scott Zimmermann

Motion: the WTA continues to support equal harvests between time periods, made by Scott McAuley, seconded by Dan Cichantek, motion passed unanimously.

Vice President's Report – Deb Koltis

- Travelled to many of the districts last year. Looking to continue the same this year. Its important to get your events on the www.wistrap.org calendar.
- A membership program continues to be elusive – program costs range from ~\$600.00/yr up to over \$2500/yr. The Trapper's Post mailing list may the most up to date list of WTA members

Treasurer's Report – Russ Warmka

The following reports were submitted –

- 2025 Balance Sheet (thru Feb 28, 2025): total assets \$162772.68
- 2025 Profit & Loss (Jan - Feb 2025): \$1465.15, (month of Feb 2025): - \$1097.88
- 2024 Profit & Loss (Jan - Dec 2024): - \$3710.06
- Fundraising letter sent out to all members asking for donations toward the finishing of the trailer's interior. Asking for financial support and actual historical items for display. If you haven't gotten it, it will be arriving in our mailboxes soon.
- A question was raised related to the life-time member fund balance and costs to support life-time memberships.

Secretary Report – Scott Robb

- Fall general membership meeting minutes were published on the www.wistrap.org website after review by the Board members.

Motion to accept the Fall 2024 General Membership Meeting minutes as presented, from the floor, seconded by Ron Koltis, motion passed unanimously.

National Trapper's Association Report – Scott McAuley

- 2025 NTA National Convention will be in Harrisburg, VA, July 17-19, 2025
- 2025 FTA National Convention will be in Spencer, Iowa, July 25-27, 2025
- Scott updated us on the list of events the WTA will be present at around the state.

WCTEP – Erin Kiesow-Webb

- Statistics presented for 2024 and 2023 trapper ed graduates: 1033 and 979 respectively.
- 220 active instructors in 2024, 177 active instructors in 2023, apprentice instructors are graduating within a year.
- (5) 2024 Fur Schools graduated 83, Northland College will have its last Fur School this year as the college is closing.

WCTEP (continued)– Erin Kiesow-Webb

- “Learn to Trap” program ... not certification classes, targeted toward trapping how to subjects.
- Policy Handbook for Trapping Ed Instructors is being developed.
- Trapping Permission Cards are again available. Order through Errin Kiesow-Webb
- Wild Photo cards are being revamped into an all-species booklet, fur bearing photo cards are being replaced by temporary tattoos to draw in the younger youth.

WCTEP – Jim Binder

- Women’s Trap Camp is receiving national acclaim.
- The Wisconsin Trapper Education Program is recognized across the country for its’ excellence.
- Jim Binder is requesting information about trappers doing other public outreach outside of Trapper Ed. Promoting trapping and fur management.

WCTEP – Jim Binder for Mike Widner

- 83 total graduates so far for 2025, 70 thru the online course and 13 thru the correspondence course. The majority of graduates are animal control operators.

Large Carnivore Report – Mike Wilhite

- Possibility of a wolf season this fall or next fall. Several bills are working their way through Congress.
- Wolf classes have been given the green light, Mike and Jim Binder are hosting a class at Shadows on the Wolf Environmental Education Center, Shiocton, WI on Saturday, May 24 starting at 8:00 AM. This is an informational class only.
- No information is available as to permit deadlines as the wolf is still not delisted. Wolf preference points will carry over from previous seasons.

WDNR Furbearer Specialist – Shawn Rossler

- Beaver Management Plan
 - Is a 10-year plan, expires 2025
 - Planning process has been green-lighted to begin
 - Beaver Management Committee, application starting in April/May.
 - Regional public workshops to gain public input.
 - Surveys have been sent out to gather perceptions about beavers.
- No movement on the beaver management, introduction, relocation, and establishing a beaver refuge in Southeastern Wisconsin.
- Spring Conservation Congress DNR rule proposal to use technology to assist in trap checking, separate from the requirement for in-person checks.

A motion was made NOT to support the use of technology to fulfilling trap check requirements as presented in Question #2 on the Conservation Congress Survey, by Jenna Malinowski, seconded by Lee Sellars, motion passed by the majority with limited opposition.

WDNR Furbearer Specialist (continued) – Shawn Rossler

- This year the rate of otter harvest is down, as of March 14, otter numbers were 1200 well below the 2500 yearly quota. WDNR is not expecting the close the otter season early.
- Trapper license sales are consistent with a bias toward 60–70-year-olds, youth numbers are increasing. Trapper retention numbers are not known currently.

Wisconsin Conservation Report – Larry Meyer

At issue is WDNR funding, especially Fish and Wildlife Departments –

- Licenses fees are anticipated to increase, trapper licenses are expecting a 100 % increase from \$20.00 annually to \$40.00 annually.
- The stewardship fund (asking for \$100,000,000/annually) contact you legislators to support budgeting of the stewardship fund.
- A resolution to increase the sales tax 0.125 of 1% has been proposed. Several other states have a similar tax.

Conservation Congress Advisory Questions –

- Question 51, Upper Mississippi River Refuge earlier opening date.
 - The refuge is working on a Master Plan.
 - Wisconsin is the only state of 4 in the refuge that has a late starting date.

A straw-pole vote for support of question #51 was made, vote unanimously supported.

- Question 52, use of traps with a jaw spread of up to 9 inches in the water.
 - Larger traps for rear foot beaver catches.
 - Concern for using larger beaver traps on land, especially if a wolf season were to occur.

A straw-pole vote for support of question #52 was made, vote unanimously supported.

- Question #53, require BMP rated traps for beaver and canines regardless of Jaw spread.
 - BMP rated trap requirements would eliminate traps both manufactured in the pass and in the future as only traps tested could be used. Effective traps are still in use that precede BMPs and it can be several years before a new trap would be selected for testing.
 - BMPs were initially developed for the European fur market and Wisconsin has been a firm supporter of the recommendations of trapping BMPs.

A straw-pole vote for support of question #53 was made, **unanimously rejected ‘requiring’ the use of BMP rated traps for beaver and canines.**

Vice President’s Award – Deb Koltis

This year’s award recognizes the contributions made by Darius and Susan Alexander.

Hall of Fame award – Chris Bezio

This year’s award is being given to Dan and Becky Schumacher for their many contributions over the years. The award will be presented at the 2025 WTA Fall Rendezvous and Convention.

Summary of the Trap Camps

Women's Trap Camp -

- 25 students enrolled
- Trapline workshops where past graduates will be invited to mentor students and set their own traplines. Main goal is to keep past graduates engaged.
- Speakers will be coming to speak with students and mingle.
- New, larger trailer was purchased. Special thanks to: Shadows on the Wolf, Riverside Hunting and Fishing Club, Scott McAuley, and others.
- The old trailer is available for sale.

Youth Trap Camps -

No Name Gang Camp – 16 students FTW – 25 students (filled), 15 waiting

Nomination of Officers – Al Nickel (Sargent at Arms)

- Nominations for the position of Vice President from the floor:
 - Junior Prudlick accepted the nomination
 - Deb Koltis accepted the nominationAfter 3 calls for nominations, floor nominations were closed.
- Nominations for the position of secretary from the floor:
 - Scott Robb deferred acceptance of the nomination for 3 months.After 3 calls for nominations, floor nominations were closed.

Nominations for either position of Vice President or Secretary are open until the Fall General Membership Meeting in September, 2025 at Antigo, WI
Contact Al Nickel, WTA Sargent of Arms with your nomination/s.
He can be reached at: afivecents@yahoo.com

Old Business –

Website navigation is extremely difficult on mobile devices, can it be made easier?
Adding events – Board members & Directors can add to the www.wistrap.org calendar.

New Business –

- The question was asked why the website is not updated faster.
- Adding the Conservation Congress Spring Hearing questions in ‘The Wisconsin Trapper’ or on the website?
- Skinning Party, April 12, 2025, starting @ 8:30 AM at The Fur Shed, Deforest, WI help is always appreciated. Revenue from the fur sale goes to the Trapper Ed program.

Motion to adjourn made by Al Nickel, seconded by Ralph Papesh, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned by President Scott Zimmermann @ 3:15 pm

Submitted by: Scott Robb, WTA Secretary