

MONTANA FUR HARVESTERS

Jan-Feb 2021

WINTER ISSUE



Trapping is wildlife management

Contents:

Page 2

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------|
| Presidents Message | Tom Fieber | Page 3 |
| Legislature Session started | Larry Rattray | Page 4 |
| Legislative News | Paul Fielder | Page 6 |
| Future Events | Tom Fieber | Page 6 |
| Wolverine Lawsuit | Todd Butts | Page 7 |
| Retired Vet's Taxidermy Shop | Amy Quinliven | Page 8 |
| Message from FWP | FWP | Page 9 |
| Greetings From Idaho | Rusty Kramer | Page 10 |
| Membership Report | Tom Fieber | Page 11 |
| The Covid "Wolf" Plan | Scott Ramsay | Page 12 |
| Food for Thought | Larry Rattray | Page 14 |
| Dogs in the wild | Tom Fieber | Page 15 |
| Feral Academy Adventures | Rachel Doble | Page 16 |
| Membership forms | | Page 18 |
| In Closing | Tom Fieber | Page 18 |

Advertisers:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Rick's Montana Trapping Supply | Page 2 |
| Immaculate Taxidermy | Page 8 |
| Idaho Trappers Association | Page 10 |
| C&S Sales | Page 15 |
| Montana Power Products | Page 19 |

"Advertisers are important contributors to our organization"

Montana Fur Harvesters

2021 Winter Newsletter

Directors:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Tom Fieber - Polson | 250-3386 |
| Rick Hawk – Kalispell | 253-4439 |
| Scott Smith – Bigfork | 837-2659 |
| Mort Hill – C Falls | 212-3699 |
| Ken Cordoza – Whitefish | 250-6038 |
| Larry Keyes – Whitefish | 250-6038 |
| Tressa Schutter – Kal. | 871-5638 |

General Contact: Tom Fieber
250-3386 or tfieber@bresnan.net

Membership: Ken Cordoza 250-6038
plowpullinken@hotmail.com

Houndsmen: Mort Hill 212-3699
roddyhill@gmail.com

Montana Fur Harvesters
PO Box 3481
Kalispell Mt 59903

Cover Photo; A December, fully prime Western Montana coyote. Trail cam photo by Larry Rattray.

Below, A long Tail-Ermine. Seems to be an abundant species here in Montana.





11 WOLF CAMP STORIES: Running a wolf trapping line is a lot of work and time invested.

Follow Scott Ramsay on his adventure.

4 Some important actions will be happening in Helena this Session. By Larry Rattray



9 Rusty Kramer, update from Idaho

Notes from the president. Tom Fieber 🐾

News from the North West

It's good that 2020 has ended. So many things seemed to go wrong with the world and our country, lot's of things that will affect many of us. Hopefully covid-19 didn't hit you. A lot of friends and people I know did get it and only had minor symptoms or none at all. None of them died and were back to normal quickly. I was lucky and have gone on as I always have, except for the masks. I made a lot of trips back to my vehicle to get one to enter some place.

We did lose opportunities to get together due to shutdowns this past year. Not all was lost, we were able to get in a few events that got us out in the public and raised funds. In that respect it was very good. I felt that we made a lot of new friends and built-up acceptance from a lot of people not in the trapping community.

One positive thing did happen in Montana, we did elect a strong republican governor and added to our strong house and senate. Fellow member, Representative Elect, Paul Fielder, has a great agenda that he will be bringing to the upcoming legislative session. We will need to muster all the support he asks for in dealing with trapping issues. I am going to be working on getting sportsmen a better future than what has happened for the past 16 years. I will be asking for your help in sending emails, letters or phone calls as issues arise with Fish Wildlife and Parks and

8 Notice from



THE OUTSIDE IS IN US ALL.

16 Meet one of Montana's top trapping moms.



legislative actions. Please try to take a few minutes to follow up, this may be the best chance we will have in a long time.

The Trapping season is up on us. Montana Trappers Association and the Montana Fur Harvesters wishes the best to each and every one for the coming season. We finished a youth muskrat trapper class on a couple of private ponds in the Flathead this fall. Bill Boehme, landowner and instructor along with Rick Hawk and myself spent two days with students on the ponds. The second day they pulled traps and had seventeen rats. The kids decided to sell the rats and donated the proceeds, \$70.00, back to the Fur Harvesters. It was a great project, thanks to landowners Linda and Bill.

Unfortunately, the fur market looks pretty bad. One report said that the strongest part of it is skunk essence and beaver castor. Lots of inventory from last year is still unsold or sold at lower prices. For those of us that rely on covering costs it may be tough. Those who are looking forward to and excited about trapping, no matter what, should have a great year. Remember, part of our reason to trap is to assist in wildlife management with state and federal wildlife managers. Maintaining predator control is vital to our overall ecosystem.

Running our trap line with traps starting on December first starts a busy schedule. We leave home at six in the morning and get back around seven every other day. We target wolves, bobcats and martins. Occasionally an ermine gets in trouble and goes to the trapping shed. Our lines run about 90 miles in different drainages. Most days end with a flashlight checking the final sets. Surprising how many times it is the last few sets that hold the catch.

One early morning, we started to unload supplies from the truck when a pack of wolves returned our howls. We grabbed our rifle, call and hiked into some open logging area where we could see a few hundred yards and howled again. Sounded like every member of the pack of ten or so howled back. We were midway up a six mile long drainage and it sounded like they were spread out the full length of it. At about two hours of howling by them and us they all started to gather up above us in the timber. At one point one howled right above us, then barked twice. Right after that another from to our left did the same. I am sure that they were warning barks to other members of the pack and that they had seen us. After three and a half hours they had all sounded like they had gotten together about three hundred yards above us in the timber out of sight. We finally gave up and left them howling on their own. Still had about ten more hours of traps to check.

Next day went to Walmart and bought some more flashlights. We are always looking for tracks and when we do find them, we try to follow them both directions to learn where they travel and keep track of how many times they use the same routes. Some days that takes a lot of our time. Other days we stop to visit with landowners, lion hunters and others. This is a public relations job that pays many dividends. I have a few great trapping partners that make this possible. I don't know how long I could make it alone but after several days without their help I can see it would not be very long. As a safety factor, having two people can mean the difference between being wore out or even death. Can't count on schedules when out on the lines. It's a tough way to enjoy life but I look forward to each day.

Thanks again to the local FWP people that we get to work with. Some may not agree with everything FWP does but we do have a very supportive bunch that supports what we do.

Last year our board members elected to change membership to all renew on January 1st. This will take a little time to work out but this should be the last time. Thanks to all of you who paid dues in 2020. From now on all renewal dates will be January 1st each year.

We have been busy over the past few years getting out educating people in a positive manner. We have been offering trapping classes, trapping seminars, hosting booths at county fairs, Cub Scout Jamborees, fur handling clinics, school shows and meeting with Fish Wildlife & Parks. We are always looking for members to volunteer to help run these events. I think that you would enjoy spending a few hours working with youths and beginning trappers and visiting with other trappers.

Note our new rates for membership. we dropped the price. Our goal to reduce overhead costs to the organization. Changing to the first of each year helps to reduce volunteer's time. This also allows members to keep up to date on activities without costing so much. Now, if you want a magazine you can check which one

and add that to the membership cost. Also, check if you want to have our quarterly newsletter mailed or receive it electronically. The electronic newsletter is free to all members and can be emailed to anyone who has submitted a valid email address. Look us up on Facebook, Montana Fur Harvesters.

We have a great article from Scott Ramsay that you should enjoy and perhaps learn something new. Larry Rattray has put together some information on dealing with legislature. Rusty Kramer from Idaho is always looking for and sharing trapping issues that benefit Montana as well. Retired veteran, Brian Reynolds, setting up a taxidermy shop in St Regis talks about that. By Amy Quinlivan. Add in an article by Rachel Doble and you have a lot to make you happy.

Tom Fieber 🐾



Larry Rattray with another Wolf. This was one of a pack of four. It was the third time he came into the set. First time he set off a trap but missed him. Came back six days later but just missed the same trap, third time he committed and waited for us to return.

Member Alert

The 67th Montana Legislative Session is Fast Approaching

Hopefully the information contained in this article will provide you with information and strategies to allow you to help protect trapping

As Montana Fur Harvesters Members, you will receive alerts of Bills the board thinks are of special importance. If you are aware of other issues we have not notified you of please let us know.

Many of you may be wondering how the Legislative process works and how best to effect outcomes as an individual sportsman.

I am going to include information that was sent out last session with some legislative updates and editorial changes by Montana Bowhunters Association Legislative Chairman, Jerry Davis. It is a general description of the legislative process, much of which has been taken from a Flathead Wildlife Alert of the Flathead Wildlife Federation.

I hope you find it useful and informative.

Legislators don't necessarily hear from constituents on all issues. Therefore calls or emails may influence a legislator's vote for or against a bill, given good reasoning.

But of course, if a Legislator is from your Senate or House District, or better yet if that person is a friend or acquaintance, then those calls or emails may have a greater influence.

The Montana Legislature runs for 90 days. This year's session for 2021 begins on January 4th and is scheduled to end April 28th or sooner.

For more information on the 2021 Montana Legislature go to:

<https://leg.mt.gov/>

With the more than 3,000 bill drafts that have been requested it is impractical that all will be forwarded to a committee.

The Legislative process actually begins a few months before the Session starts when legislators request bill draft(s) (LC). Once a bill's draft language has been approved by legal and received editorial reviews the bill is then given a HB or SB number and the verbiage is posted on the Legislative website. The bill will then be read on the floor of the Primary Sponsor's chamber.

After the chamber's reading of the bill, it is then routed to the appropriate committee for a public hearing. The public hearing is the first but not only time the public can make verbal and/or written testimony for or against a bill.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Prior to the hearing is the best time to have the most impact. If your legislator sits on that committee it is important that they hear from you personally. Your message should be short and to the point but also needs to be courteous. If the bill is killed or tabled in committee from either chamber it is basically dead.

After its hearing the committee may pass, kill, amend or table a bill. Bills that are passed by the committee must then be read and voted on 2 more times on the floor of that chamber. Then, the bill is then transmitted to the other chamber where it undergoes the same process beginning with a committee hearing. If a bill is amended in the 2nd chamber it must go back to the 1st chamber for joint resolution.

Bills will often come up for votes on 1 to 2 days' notice and move quickly so you must track them and contact legislators promptly.

February 17th is the last day to introduce general bills and resolutions. All general bills and resolutions must be transmitted to the other chamber by February 27th. All revenue and general appropriation bills and referenda must

be transmitted by March 29th. As those dates approach the legislative pace will accelerate. Once a bill passes both chambers it goes to the Governor for signature, veto, amendments or take no action. A bill becomes law after 10 days if no action from the Governor. A Governor's veto can be overridden by a 2/3 vote of the legislature.

The MFH Board will try to not flood you with Alerts but only highlight critical bills. You can use the information in this to do your own research and comment.

Bill tracking, Legislator Contacts websites:

Tracking a Specific Bill

To look up bills proposed for the 2021 Session go to the LAWS website at:

[http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/law0203w\\$.startup?P_SESS=20211](http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/law0203w$.startup?P_SESS=20211)

Under 2021 Laws you can also search for all bills submitted by a particular legislator or under several subject matters.

Contacting a Legislator

To locate your legislator by name or Legislative District go to:

<https://leg.mt.gov/legislator-lookup/>

You can contact legislators using the information displayed under their Contact Information listed under the legislator-lookup link. Of course, if you have additional contact information for that Legislator use that if you think it may elicit a more rapid or effective response.

Commenting on Bills

There is a new easier method this session to track and comment on bills that will be heard in the next 3 or 4 days.

<https://leg.mt.gov/public-testimony/>

This page allows you to see what bills are coming and you can comment or sign up to testify via zoom. You must comment by noon the day before the bill is heard

You may call in and leaving short messages for up to 5 legislators or an entire Committee. The phone number is [\(406-444-4800\)](tel:406-444-4800). Keep it short and to the point, give your name & where you live, mention the bill number, that you support or oppose the bill, and a few comments why (in your own words).

Though it is early there are some draft bills that are being proposed by legislators that could affect trapping. You can create your own account of bills to follow, there is a tutorial on the LAWS website.

I know that is a lot of information but I want our membership to be as informed as possible. I hope it is helpful. If you have any problems or questions, please let me know and I will try to get you the information.

Respectfully submitted by Larry Rattray 🐾

PLEASE HELP US GET GOOD TRAPPING

LEGISLATION PASSED

by Representative Paul C Fielder

We have a chance to make some gains for trapping in Montana this legislative session, but we need YOUR HELP. I'm not trapping this season, I'm in the Montana House of Representatives. I want to tell you how you can be most effective to help get good sportsmen/trapping related legislation passed in the next few weeks/months. We all want to express our opinion, here's how to do it effectively.

On your computer go to this website: **LEG.MT.GOV** Once there, click on **Laws and Bills** which will take you to **2021 Session Bill Lookup**. That takes you to a page where you can look up bills by their bill number (example: HB138, LC1908, SB111), all of the bills by a bill sponsor (example (Fielder Paul, Brown Bob), or subject matter. Once LC bills have been introduced, they will be given an HB or SB number, depending on if they originated in the House or Senate. When you click on the bill you're interested in, you can read the bill and also see the schedule of when it will be heard and voted on and if that is going to happen in the House or Senate.

Your testimony will be needed on many bills in the legislature this year because the people opposed to hunting and trapping will be very active. In person testimony is always most effective. But, on that LEG.MT.GOV page, you can also click on the link that says **"You can provide testimony without coming to the Capitol"**. That allows you to see committee hearing schedules, tells how to comment on a bill by e-mail or phone. **It is simple to call 406 444-4800** and say "I would like to leave a comment on a bill (example, HB138) to (name your legislator, or the entire House FWP or Senate FW Committee). Try to time your comments so they reach legislators 1-2 days prior to the committee hearing or floor vote. Remember, don't just tell your legislator, tell many of them, especially those on the F&W Committees

I suggest, going to the MT.LEG.GOV website and finding your way around it a little. We have a government of the people that participate. It is not too complicated. Keep it short and simple. **Anybody that can figure out how to trap a coyote or turn a beaver into a quality pelt can figure out how to get your message to legislators about how you'd like them to vote.**

These are SOME of the bills we're working hardest on:
HB138 sponsor Fielder - Remove phone number from snare tags and allow ALS numbers
LC1908 sponsor Fielder - Allow snaring for wolves
LC1909 sponsor Fielder – Increase length of wolf trapping season
LC1910 sponsor Fielder – Add wolf license to big game combination licenses

LC1913 sponsor Fielder – Increase FWP Commission from 5-7 Commissioners, one from each region

LC3033 sponsor Fielder – Allow hound hunting and chase seasons for black bears

LC3034 sponsor Fielder – Allow trapping reciprocity with other states

LC3112 sponsor Bob Brown – Place wolves on predator list

LC3113 sponsor Bob Brown – Reimbursement for wolf trapping & hunting expenses

SB60 sponsor Pat Flowers – Mandatory trapper education

I am working on other bills on a variety of subjects because we are "A government of the people, by the people and for the people – that participate.

By Paul Fielder. 

As of January, 20th the session is going strong. We have been sending comments supporting bills and promoting sportsmen issues. It will take a lot of time and repetition as the bills go from committees to both houses then to the governor.

Future Events; Time is marching on and it's hard to schedule events in the future. Especially with an uncertain future on lockdowns. But here goes an attempt. We will be hosting booths at the **Montana Sportsmen Expo** at the Flathead County Fairgrounds Trade Center on February 19, 20, 21st. Next will be the **Kalispell Gun Show** on March 26, 27, 28 at the Majestic Valley Arena North of Kalispell.

We will be setting up our always popular **Fur Clinic** hopefully mid-March in the Flathead.

We are still on hold waiting for decision on Mandatory Trapper Education before we can setup a class. I will try to setup an informal **Trapper Rendezvous** in April with demos, vendors and pot luck lunch in the Flathead. I will have to send out emails once we confirm dates and a venue.

We will be scheduling a **Fur Harvesters Meeting** coming up soon. Again, I will need to coordinate the date and time with board members. These meetings are always open to all people interested. We will be voting on Board positions so anyone who would like to step up for one, contact me and we will get your name and ideas. Other business will be discussed.

A March youth muskrat trapping seminar will be for some kids from 8 to 18 years old. We promised to return to help with some damage control. Contact me at tfieber@bresnan.net to reserve a spot. It will be a two-day class where we will set traps on a Saturday and check them on Sunday. We provide everything, just make sure you dress appropriately.

Tom Fieber 

Ongoing battle with anti's:

Wolverine Lawsuit is not really about the Wolverine!

I recently read a newspaper article on a lawsuit to list the Wolverine under the Endangered Species Act, and thought it might be misleading to those who don't understand the politics of the situation. So, since I have been a biological consultant in northwest Montana for almost 30 years, and have an understanding of these issues, I felt obligated to share my knowledge on the subject. What you need to understand is that the lawsuit brought by Wild Swan, Swan View Coalition, WildEarth Guardians, Alliance for Wild Rockies, and Footloose Montana, against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), has very little to do with the long term health of the Wolverine population in the U.S.. What the lawsuit is truly about is Money, Power, and ultimately Control.

The money side of it is that lawsuits like this one are how groups like these, and Western Environmental Law Center, fund themselves through the Equal Access to Justice Act. They file the lawsuit, and if there is even a shred of doubt in the USFWS position, the judge rules in favor of the plaintiffs, and the American taxpayers are on the hook for the Law Center's legal bills, as well as time billed by the other groups for conducting "support research" for the lawsuit. It's a pretty sweet gig for groups like these. However, the money is really only a side benefit of the lawsuit. What these groups are really after is Power and Control.

If the lawsuit is successful enough to bully the USFWS into listing the Wolverine under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), that is when these groups get the Power and Control they are truly seeking. Once the Wolverine is listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA, these very same groups will use the listing as a tool to restrict forest access, and curtail forest management activities (see Spotted Owl, Lynx, and Grizzly Bear as previous examples). Now the money train really starts rolling as these groups will use the Wolverine listing to sue the Forest Service and any other agency, every time they even consider harvesting timber, or allowing motorized recreation, within smelling distance of a wolverine. Currently the number one target of groups like these is



Montana Fur Harvesters
PO Box 3481
Kalispell, MT 59903
mtfurs@gmail.com

CHARTER MEMBERS

\$100 or more for 2020/2021

The following members have gone the extra mile to support MFH. Without this commitment, it would be hard to publish this and host the fur shows.

To date:

Tom Gilmore, Tom has donated more time and merchandise to trapping organizations than most. His Fur Handling Clinics in Libby are top notch.

Raven Van Den Bosch

Raven came for the Squarehead Palooza last summer from Virginia. She is a true friend of the trapping community nation-wide and a joy to be with.

Bill Boehme, Bill has been supporting us as a charter member for years. He is a great seminar instructor and a real member of the trapping community.

Linda Tutvedt, Linda not only joined as a charter member but offered muskrat trapping on her Property this fall. Her generosity was really appreciated by the kids and instructors as well.

Josh Jurek, Josh raised \$400 at the Palooza that he donated back to MFH. Josh is a dedicated trapper and a great artist.

Dan Thingelstad, Dan has donated several wolf pelts that he donated back the proceeds and helps run booths. His work on the Fisher Denning Box project was above and beyond.

Volunteers, Larry Rattray, Rick Hawk, Mort Hill, Scott Smith, Victor Perez, Wyatt White have all donated countless hours that benefit the organization.

snowmobilers, and listing of the wolverine would provide the perfect tool for them ELIMINATE backcountry snowmobiling, and any other recreational activity they don't approve of, (If I had to guess mountain bikers would be next on the hit list).

FYI – The USFWS has got it right in the FACT that the wolverine population in the U.S. is currently healthy and likely growing, with documentation of wolverines heading south into Colorado, Nevada, and California, from their core habitat in the northern Rockies. The argument to list the wolverine is based on a theory that global climate change “could possibly” result in a loss of wolverine natal habitat. I don't know about you, but I don't think it's prudent to start listing species under the ESA because of a “could possibly” reliant on global climate change. Like I said, it's not really about the wolverine.

Todd Butts – Trego, Montana 🐾

Retired vet launches taxidermy shop in St. Regis



Brian Reynolds starts the cleaning process on Brandon Arborgast's 5x5 whitetail buck in his home work shop at Immaculate Taxidermy in St. Regis. (Photo courtesy of Trista Stanley) By **AmyQuinlivan** Mineral Independent | December 16, 2020 12:00 AM

Hunting season may be over, but now is when the work begins for Brian Reynolds.

A retired United States Air Force Master Sergeant turned taxidermist, Reynolds launched his new business, Immaculate Taxidermy, in St. Regis in April. It was his first fall being open while hunters and sportsmen were harvesting game.

Originally from Roosevelt, Utah, Reynolds relocated to St. Regis five years ago once he completed his service of 22 years in the Air Force. His other trades include driving truck for S.A.C.S. Trucking Inc. out of Missoula. His real avocation is for taking his clients trophy animals and creating authentic displays that tell a story and last a lifetime.

Reynolds remarked, “My friend's Dad was a taxidermist growing up so I was introduced to taxidermy around the age of five, and I was hunting as soon as I could walk.” More recently he said, “I took an advanced level six-week taxidermy course focusing on competition level mounts.” Reynold explained, “I'm a full-service taxidermy shop, mammals, fish, birds and custom work.”

A typical work day finds Reynolds actively arranging numerous projects all at once.

“I work on multiple mounts at the same time all in different stages,” he said. “I'm currently doing a bear rug mount but also have a bear in the beginning stages. I have a few deer capes being tanned, and a life-size mammal getting ready to mount plus building a form for a fish.”

Having the ability to work from home is a bonus for Reynolds. He stated, “I do all the work in my shop located on my property I just built so I do have a store front for customers and have mounts on display.”

One of the most fascinating methods of cleaning animal skulls in taxidermy is the use of dermestid beetles, approximately 200,000 of them. Commonly referred to as skin beetles, these flesh-eating bugs can clean a skull in very little time.

Reynolds described, “The basic process is skinning the skull, removing eyes/brains and then the majority of the meat and fat. I then introduce the skull to the beetles. The time differs on size and time of year but normally a deer skull takes roughly three weeks.”

Once the beetles have done their job Reynolds degreases the skull and continues with a whitening process that is repeated two or three times. Lastly, he said, “Then I work

on any areas that need extra attention, clean it all up and it's ready to go.”

A common misconception is the duration of start to finish on a trophy project or mount.

Reynolds shared, “I would say the time and patience it takes, there is a whole process from skinning to fleshing, turning the eyes lips and ears then the tanning after that measuring, ordering the mannequin eyes and ears then you finally get to the mounting process.”

Of all the various species and prized animals he’s worked on, Reynolds concluded, “I can’t say that I have a favorite, but I’m currently working on a European mount of an elk with one antler growing out the front of the skull but its more about saving the memory or the trophy for the hunter.”

Surprisingly Reynolds has been fascinated by the minor details of some smaller creatures he’s encountered. “I enjoy all the colors of waterfowl people are amazed when they see them close up of how many different colors they actually have,” he observed.

Immaculate Taxidermy has had customers from Montana, Idaho, and even Utah. But as with most small businesses this year, times are tough. He mentioned, “Business has picked up but is slower than normal due to the pandemic. The main problem I’m hearing is financial so I work with locals on payment plans so they can still get their trophy mounted.”

St. Regis resident Brandon Arbogast found himself a beautiful 5x5 whitetail buck this hunting season. It was the first time he’s ever taken a head to get it cleaned professionally. He remarked, “His work is something to truly be admired, so are his shoulder mounts, he's really good at what he does and has fair pricing.”

All of his mounting services are a set price on what type of mount the customer wants, such as a shoulder mount, or something as grand as a life-size mount.

When he’s not creating animal artistry for his clients from home, he’s out enjoying all that Montana has to offer.

“I love hunting and have all my life. I hunt with a rifle, bow and muzzleloader. Hunting and fishing were the main reasons for retiring in Montana.”

By Amy Quinlivan 🐾

Originally published in the Mineral Independent.

A Message from FWP



THE OUTSIDE IS IN US ALL.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is asking trappers, researchers, and others in close contact with live felids (cats) and mustelids (weasels) to be conscious of the potential to transmit COVID into wild populations with unknown consequences.

COVID has been documented being transmitted from humans to cats and weasels in captivity and the consequences for wild populations is unknown.

Potential transmission would be most likely where researchers are live-capturing and releasing animals or in situations where a trapper might release an animal. Of particular note are lynx as they are designated as a federally threatened species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and FWP are asking trappers to carry with them and use gloves, a mask, and a catch-pole when releasing animals. Normal trapping regulations and procedures remain in place, but please take precautions to eliminate potential transmission. As always, FWP is available to assist in release when needed or in situations where the trapping regulations require notification of the department.

Regional FWP office phone numbers are available [online](https://www.fwp.mt.gov) at [fwp.mt.gov](https://www.fwp.mt.gov).

Respectfully submitted by Larry Rattray 🐾



Western Montana. 10 pound male Fisher. Taken in Region 2. It was taken in a bobcat cubby after an earlier visit. Tom Fieber

Greetings from Idaho,

We are quickly coming up on our fur sale and wanted to go over a few items. The fur sale dates are Jan 15th - 17th and March 12th - 14th at the Elmore County Fairgrounds in Glenns Ferry Idaho. We are checking in fur Thursday evening, Friday all day and Saturday until 10AM. We are selling all fur Sunday morning. The commission is 5% for ITA members and 10% for non ITA members. **SOMETHING NEW THIS YEAR WILL BE A 1% COMMISSION FOR ALL NO SALES. THAT MEANS IF YOU NO SALE AN ITEM YOU WILL BE CHARGED 1% OF YOUR ASKING PRICE. EXAMPLE, IF YOU NO-SALE A BOBCAT AND HAD A MINIMUM OF \$250 ON IT, YOU WOULD PAY US \$2.50.** Our fur sale staff spends a ton of time and headache dealing with the no-sales. We are also seeing some people bringing their fur in not wanting to sell it, just wanting to shop it and get it graded and a price for it. I'm sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

If you haven't been to our fur sales before they are an event you don't want to miss! We will have fish and

game tagging bobcats and otter, trapping demos, fur handling demos, fish and game speakers, and a general membership meeting. This is a great opportunity to meet some new friends, learn some new trapping tips and just be at a trapping event! One of the highlights of the fur sale is our live auction with our donations. I have been asking each person to bring an item for our live auction to cover the costs of our sale. This could be some old traps, stretchers, tanned fur, horns, handmade items, practically anything. We then get the legendary fur buyer George Kortum to be our auctioneer on the items on Sunday while we wait for the fur bids to be entered in the computer. It is worth coming just to watch this event, trust me!

On to fur prices: even big time fur buyers can't completely predict what prices will look like by mid January. I don't have to tell you all about the virus chaos affecting things but here is what I can tell you about prices. Coyote grading will be tougher. Heavy coyotes will still be sought after but prices will be down 30% - 40

Protecting, Preserving and Promoting Trapping

IDAHO TRAPPERS ASSOCIATION



| | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Regular Membership | \$30.00 |
| Family Membership | \$40.00 |
| Junior Membership | \$15.00 |
| (18 years and under) | |

Life Membership Call (208)-870-3217

Learn More and
Become a Member at
idahotrappersassociation.com/join-us



%. If you have coyotes in your area, trap them! Even with prices down they are still very good money. Trap them until they start breaking on the hips in your area. Those badly rubbed, broken hips, and no guard hair coyotes that had some value the past couple years probably won't be worth skinning. Bobcat market looks extremely tough. I'm hearing a lot of carryover from last year and I know of a ton of cats sitting in freezers all over the west that are going to be hitting these sales. If you have a well spotted big bobcat with a casty belly you will probably get more money leaving the feet on and hoping a craft buyer wants it as a wall hanger. Fox are still pretty cheap prices; I know a lot of coyote trappers are turning them loose. If you have a select cherry red or cross fox I advise keeping the feet on it to appeal to the craft market. The ranch mink industry is going through a mess in Europe with millions of mink being buried due to covid concerns. Whether that instantly affects water fur is too early to tell. I am hearing some increased interest in rats, but I don't think prices will be much different than last year. I will have some craft guys at the sale interested in beaver and otter again, but prices are tough for them as well. Castor prices are still sky high so save those castors! That being said we will accept all fur in any quantity and species! We treat the person the same whether they have two muskrats or 300 coyotes and it does not matter what state you are from! Everyone is valuable to us! We will be accepting fur shipped in again but the same rules apply: I need a copy of your trapping license, cites tags on lynx/otter/bobcats, get it to me a week before the sale and you CANNOT put a minimum on the fur. Please be careful shipping water animals that may cause you to be upside down on price due to shipping. Any fur needs to be shipped to me personally: Rusty Kramer 246B South Highway 46 Fairfield, Id 83327.

Last thing I want to talk to you all about is our new sustaining membership program. This really started when I got back into collecting trapping and hunting patches a few months ago. (By the way if anyone has trapping patches for sale or trade please contact me!) I started researching and contacting different patch collectors and noticed some states have a sustaining membership program. Essentially the program is this: for \$25 you get a listing in the magazine and a specially designed patch. This year's design is a trapped wolf that was caught by legendary trapper and ITA board member Justin Webb. This wolf was caught the day before the funeral of late great Delbert Jepson and I happened to be along with Justin when he caught it. This program is just a way for a person to help out the ITA

during these tough times all non-profits are feeling during the pandemic. Please consider supporting this program, you can mail \$25 check to our PO box or use your card on our website. Only 100 patches made and sure to be a collector item.

As always call, text, facebook message, or website message me with questions.

Thank you

Rusty Kramer

Idaho Trappers Association President

208-870-3217

Respectfully submitted 🐾

School programs are part of what we do.



MONTANA FUR HARVESTERS

Memberships Report:

I want to thank all of you who have taken the time to renew or sign up as new members. Our membership is growing and charter members are increasing. All the directors who put in so much time meeting the public and putting on events open to all has been paying off. It would be nice to have more trappers join as it gives us a stronger voice.

Invite a friend or fellow trapper to join or gift them a membership to get them acquainted with us. We are always looking for assistance for the public events we put on. It is a good way to meet fellow like-minded people and learn new methods and tips.

As noted in the past few issues, we have gone to memberships all renewing on January 1st. This has helped with record keeping and time required to operate. The cost of memberships was reduced to \$20 for single and \$30 for families. Now you can order trapper magazines through us for a discounted price if you choose. Past president, Ken Cordoza, has volunteered to take over the membership position. It is a welcome help that will benefit us immensely. **Tom Fieber** 🐾

THE COVID “WOLF” PLAN 2020



By Scott Ramsay

2020 was a year that, I doubt, many of us won't forget soon enough. In April, while in the field with my job, I was informed to go home and wait for further instructions, before doing any further work. Spring flew by and the month of June was on me. During this time, I was able to finish some projects around our property that had been put off due to time restraints in the past. The main project was to finish my fur shed. Summer was now on me and my energy level was building. I was told in early July we would not be going into the field to work and that most of my work would be from home on my computer. There was no way I could spend summer and fall at home. I made the decision that I was going to put some time into my line and trap wolves. I prepped and gathered all my gear throughout June and July and headed for the hills. Covering the mountains in wolf country with trail cameras would be my next endeavor. I laid out a camera line, checked them weekly, and recorded data as the summer progressed. The line was coming together by mid-August.

I learned throughout the summer that trail cameras didn't seem to bother the wolves so I left them out when the season opened. On opening day, I was able to get nineteen sets out. Since wolves' travel, mainly in groups of two or more, I gang set most of the spots. Gang setting is putting out more than one set in each location. In a few spots I'd put out two traps and occasionally put out four sets in one location. The largest pack I had on camera, from my summer pictures, was five. Things went extremely well on the opener, as far as putting in sets, until the last trap I

threw into the ground. After bedding the trap and covering it with waxed sand and blending it, I reached over the set to put some bait into the dirt hole, and somehow put my left hand onto the pan! Before I could even think the word “ouch”, my left ring finger was in the jaws across the fingernail. I immediately reached for my setters, which I always carry as a #1 rule while setting wolf traps, and disgustingly noticed I didn't bring them along to this spot when I walked away from my ATV. In a five second period, many scenarios went through my head. Wolf traps are large and heavy and not easy for a normal man to

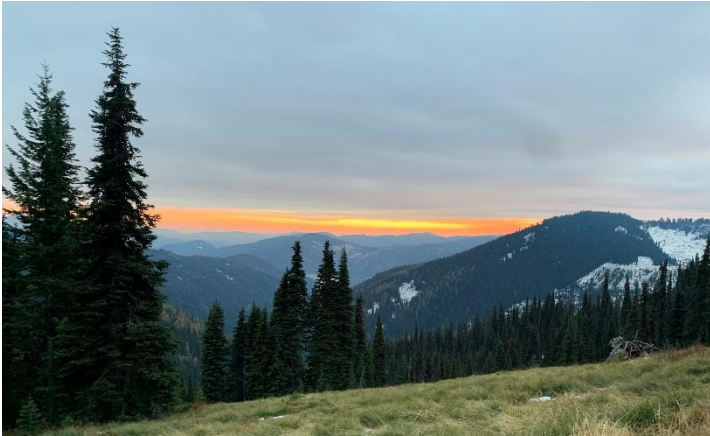


set. In fact, I don't know anyone that could do it with one hand. Some of the scenarios that crossed my mind in that short period: cutting my finger off, being found by searchers 3 months later after starving to death, being eaten by predators while in the trap, and lunging like a coyote against the trap till my finger finally peeled off. The adrenaline was most likely my biggest helper in this situation as I quickly put my left knee on one lever and shoved the other lever down enough to pull my left hand free. To take my mind off the pain, I walked back to my 4-wheeler, grabbed my setters, then walked back to my set and did the reset. I knew there would be some damage so I left my glove on till I returned to camp.

The next few days consisted of adding new lines that I knew had some wolves passing through. Wolves are territorial and travel their areas similar to what big cats do. They follow the elk herds and put pressure on these ungulates nonstop. It was rare that I'd find a herd of elk staying in



any immediate area for more than three or four days. The wolves were in constant pursuit of these animals and to say the elk weren't on constant look out, would be an understatement. I found quite a few fresh elk kills and can tell you, they don't



discriminate. They kill calves, cows, young bulls, and old bulls. To say they only kill the sick and weak, is a straight out lie. Most of the kills I found were devoured overnight. Some were left partly eaten, and some were eaten on over a two or three-day period. Their diet didn't only consist of elk, but I also found moose and deer, both mule deer and white tails. The damage I saw to our herds was sickening and states that aren't managing the wolf populations need to take note. These states are doing the big game and the public a huge disservice. In my opinion, its complete negligence on the parts of those that are supposed to be balancing and managing our herds. Politics and game management shouldn't be mixed.

During the summer months I had pictures of a wolf that was running, predominantly, by itself. It was a black color faze with some lighter markings on its flanks and had silver tipped guard hairs down its back. It seemed to be hanging in one general area and was passing through a good saddle on a two-week basis. According to the notes I'd been taking, this wolf should be passing through around the first week of October. Idaho has a three-day check rule (72 hours) so my regular checks throughout September seemed to confirm my data on this wolf. My checks throughout September were dry, for the most part. I quickly learned that any of my baited sets that contained sodium chloride, had a tendency to attract ungulates. The word "sodium" should be the give away as to why they were interested. I had many traps throughout the month of September set off. The remakes got old real fast so I started switching many of those sets to pee posts using coyote, fox and wolf urine. My male lab, "Buck", did a great job in helping me locate where the wolves would regularly visit to mark their territory. He made it obvious when he located one of these spots. I spent most of the first months setting, resetting, and

checking. On October 3, on my last check of the day, the black wolf I had been expecting, was pinched in a MB750, on 10 foot of swiveled chain and a drag, about 30 feet from a walk through, baited set, tangled in some small alder brush. It was a two-year-old male. The set was baited with a good friend's bait called Meat Lovers, which consisted of aged muskrat, bobcat, and horse meat, with some other special ingredients mixed in. Added, was a small dabbling of gland lure in the hole and some coyote urine at the post in front of the walk through. The trap was bedded approximately 16" in front of the hole and an auger (4") on a drill was used to make a hole that was about a foot deep at a 30-40-degree angle under a small bush that served as a focal point along a heavily used trail. It was a perfect front foot catch and held well with no foot damage. I picked up a few more in October and things were looking good.

My trapping camp became my home for the next few months and my time alone and the solitude of the high country, sure helped refresh my soul. Besides the company of my dog, and a couple visits by my wife, Julie, it was a dream, long-term camping trip, living out of a wall tent, that all us trappers dream of doing someday. I've



had some adventures like this throughout my life, but never this deep in the high timber country. With the new wi-fi capabilities on the new vehicles, I was able to keep up with requirements of my job without leaving the mountains. I had two locations up high on mountains that I could get out on my cellphone and used

my inReach unit to text, if needed, from anywhere I wanted. At the end of October, my brother-in-law, Rod, showed up to hang out and help me for a very productive 10 day stay. During that stretch, we made



checks, removed sets that were getting tough to check and prepped a long marten line I'd start at the beginning of November. There was now snow on the ground so we took the



tires off the ATV's, and added tracks. This made the travel much slower, but sure lessened our chances of getting stuck in deep snow. I had three lines that I maintained. Line 1 was 79 miles round trip. Line 2 was 129 miles round trip, and line 3 was 89 miles long. There was no free time to play, and most days got me back to camp well after dark. Rod jumped in as if it was his own line and worked

his tail off. His interest and motivation to learn was on its own level and being a promoter of trapping, I thoroughly enjoyed showing him as much as I could. His interest, will lead into the two of us teaming up every year to run a line. Within a month of heading back to his home, he's already taken his certification course and classes. During Rods stay of 10 days, the odds of us picking up a wolf wasn't on our sides. We did our checks and put out marten sets all day and into the dark. On the final hour of the day, we headed through the deep snow and into a high mountain basin about 7000 feet in elevation. I had two wolf sets fairly close together at the end of a rough, 3-mile-long logging road. As we rounded the last corner, we noticed some movement directly below the upper set. I stopped the 4-wheeler, grabbed my scoped rifle and aimed it toward the bouncing figure in the fading light. The scope brightened things to verify we had caught a wolf. We arrived at the set as light faded and crawled through the thick brush towards, where we thought we had seen the wolf, hung up in the trap. We needed flashlights to see and stayed cautious as we approached where the wolf was at. Rod spotted it first. It had a quiet, mostly timid temperament, as most do. We dispatched the big female, loaded it, and headed back to camp. Rod got to experience his first wolf catch and helped out immensely in this pelting process.

The snow pushed my camp out in early December, but I've continued my line as the winter progresses. I commute over a couple hundred miles daily and using a snowmobile in the deep snow. I pulled marten traps as I want to maintain the population so I can continue this wilderness line in the future. My wolf sets are in lower elevations as the wolves have followed the elk into their winter grounds. It's been a complete patience game that's tested my mental stability and physical endurance, and mostly, my patience. This is an addictive game. There's been times I've thought about pulling sets, then a wolf shows up and I find myself re-motivated. I'm fairly satisfied with the season thus far knowing I've helped our big game herds in some way in this immediate area. Despite this awkward year in history, I was able to make the

best of it and fulfill a bucket list activity. Thanks to my wife, Julie, for keeping my food and gas supply up to date and for Foundation for Wildlife Managements reimbursement program (F4WM). I couldn't do this without the funds they supply for helping to manage wolves. Hopefully, my luck will continue this winter and our country will return to normal. Tight chains my friends.

By Scott Ramsay 🐺



I live in NE Washington and also have a place in E. Oregon. I trap N. Idaho, S. Idaho, E. Oregon, and NE Washington, and was fortunate to spend some time w/ my good friend, Paul Antczak, on his line in Montana this December 2020. As soon as MT adopts Idaho's policies, I'll be consistently trapping MT too. My wife of 36 years, Julie, is a big helper on my line and my two sons, Dan and Mitch, are licensed trappers.

Scott with an ideal well-behaved wolf and a fur shed loaded with Idaho wolf pelts



Dogs running ahead in the woods

Larry and I spent the day hunting in the Swan. It was a nice day, new snow and low temps. We had hiked in several miles on closed roads checking out some logging blocks for elk and deer. Grizzly bear tracks were pretty much everywhere we went on the upper areas so we dropped to lower elevations. During the day we crossed where two wolves had been following elk tracks, we kept our eyes and ears open for bears and wolves. Fortunately, we didn't see the grizzlies but were hoping to see the wolves. The deer were moving well throughout the day but held out for more mature bucks.

Surprising how many deer walk by with us sitting at a blazing smoky fire. After hiking the area for the first five hours sitting doesn't seem so boring. At my age I seem to have more patients than in my younger years. We cow called off and on hoping that the wolves might come in to investigate. That was about as productive as calling in elk, zero, but kept things interesting.

Later as the day wore on, we decided to head back towards our vehicle. We had a mile or so to get there and stopping to rattle every so often got us back a little before dark. The road back to the highway took us back over the upper country above where the wolf tracks were headed earlier in the day. We had just about reached the highway, coming around a corner we spotted a large white wolf sitting on the road about seventy yards away at the next corner. I stopped and pointed it out, we looked at it a little hesitant to shoot. Things weren't quite right. About that time a black one came from around the corner and walked up to the white one. I was sure the black one was a wolf but now the white one turned his head sideways and it did not look right. Both dogs were large dogs. We decided not to shoot at that point. About fifteen seconds later a car came around the corner. Thank goodness we hadn't shot.

The young lady started to load them into her car, we drove down to meet her and explain what had just happened. Larry very politely suggested that she would be wise to put something orange on the dogs for their safety. She very belligerently said it was our job to identify our targets not hers. She sped off in a huff. It should be apparent to dog owners that dogs are canines and wolves come in all colors. People that do follow behind their dogs with cars on mountain roads please mark them with something that sets them apart from a wolf or coyote. One person said that he spray-paints his, another puts an orange vest on theirs, some keep an orange collar on year-round. Anything would be smart to do, nobody wants to shoot someone's dog and most people don't want their dogs shot,

At our age we aren't as fast as we were, chances are that someone younger and maybe not as experienced would have shot in that situation. It would have been tragic for everyone had that happened. Most pet owners are responsible and do take measures to avoid problems. Hope

to get word out to pet owners to take precautions.

By Tom Fieber 🐾

If Wolves Hate It... We Build It!

C&S SALES
Trapper Made

Custom Built Rigs and Stakes
MB Traps
Bridger Brawn Traps
Duke Traps

All the trapping supplies you'll need for this season are in stock

Universal Trap Setter
Designed to set and release for
Bridger Brawn #9 Wolf Trap
Minnesota MB750 Wolf Trap
Alaskan #9 Wolf Trap

\$19.95/Set

164 Victor Crossing W | Victor, MT
406.642.3293 | cliff@trappingsuppliesmt.com
TrappingSuppliesMT.com

C&S Will Modify or Build Any Trap You Need!

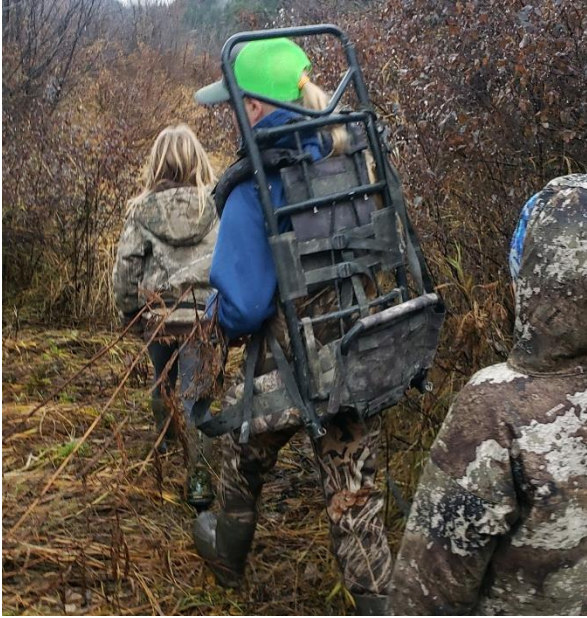
Notice: Region One FWP change.

Region One office will be accepting furbearers and wolves for tagging on Mondays and Thursdays only, at the office. Due to having a biologist needing to be available to do so. Our region does not have enough biologists to keep one on hand every day just in case someone might come in.

We want our staff out in the fields doing their work there as much as possible. As a sportsman, I would want to see that as well. All is not lost, now we have until 10 days after the close of the season to have **furbearers** tagged. The exception is **Wolves**, they are required to present the hide and skull (unfrozen) within 10 days after harvest.

In Region Two for years, we have met with game wardens on the traplines, at public places and most any other place. Just give them a call and they are very accommodating. I have also had the same experience in Region One. Call ahead and set up a place to meet.

By Tom Fieber 🐾



Three homemade drowning rods cradled in the arms of my 2 oldest children as they marched one in front of the other through the wooded area behind the barn of a friend's house. The smallest, most feral child, lead the way to the narrow deer trail that connected us to another time. (Or so it seemed.) One where society and nature were interlaced.

They squabbled at each other while struggling to maneuver the 10ft rebar through the thorny branches. It required communication and patience.

I hollered over their heads, telling the youngest, "Wait up! Don't go down to the water without me! You don't want to surprise a bear!"

The excitement of the adventure ahead had her dismiss my warnings completely. She charged forward, yelling "Hurry up you guys!"

The mom in me was stressed and thinking of everything that could possibly go wrong. But the trapper in me was filled with just as much enthusiasm.

This was the start of our second trapping season. And as I dodged branches and my messy bun collected debris on top of my head, I realized how wonderfully weird my life had become.

Trapping wasn't something I grew up around. In fact, I was like many others who knew nothing about it but was opposed to it. Being an animal lover, I hated the idea of beautiful wildlife being unnecessarily killed for their fur. It's hard for me to admit this, but... I used to put little stick crosses next to the gophers my dad and brothers would shoot. (Hard to believe I was on the verge of being a PETA activist, right?!)

I stood along the bank of the Clark Fork River, taking it all in. The scenery was absolutely breathtaking. Just like a photo from a calendar. BUT I was in it. The sky was a brilliant baby blue and the river glistened as the rays from the sun

danced along with the current. The mountain air was crisp with the smell of Fall.

My kids were already down to the water's edge looking for rocks to skip. They had dropped their heavy and awkward load in the grass and ran off with excitement.

My oldest daughter was the first to notice the fresh beaver sign. There were chewed branches scattered next to a muddy mound. The sweet smell of castor swirled down river right to me as I navigated my way in the water with my waders.

I smiled, realizing she was applying what she had learned from the previous year on our amateur trapline.

Feral Academy was the name I had chosen for our homeschool. My husband and I wanted to incorporate hands-on learning experiences for our kids so they would fully appreciate the history of our area and the heritage that lead to our civilized world. This is where the idea of our own trapline originated.

We began watching YouTube videos where we discovered a show called Trappers Inc. Hosted by a fun-loving couple named Rich and Sandy Mellon. They explained why trapping was necessary to manage furbearer populations to sustain a healthy and balanced ecosystem.

One thing led to another and the next thing I know, I'm messaging a local trapper by the name of Dan Helterline.

In the dark hours of the morning, I showed up at his house. An awful odor wafted from his fur shed as I stood



awkwardly in the doorway of his house with my arms full. A sack lunch, a large bottle of water, hand-warmers, my coat and a hat.

He hardly acknowledged me as he worked in his kitchen preparing dinner in the slow cooker. Abruptly he asked, "Why do you want to learn how to trap?" Then he went on to tell me I was the only woman who had ever wanted to go on a ride along with him. I blushed, realizing he viewed me as an abnormality like I did him.

Fortunately, I had already rehearsed the answer to his question in my mind a handful of times so I quickly summarized how I had fallen in love with the mountains, enjoyed hunting and fishing. And now wanted to learn how I could help the ungulate populations from predation. Not only

that but I elaborated on how our history and heritage was being forgotten and his skillset was a lost, unappreciated art...

I didn't have the foresight then to see how trapping would help my family get through the worst event of our lives.

I dropped my bag of gear on the bank of the river with relief, then kneeled in the shallow water pulling a TS-85 out. The kids began to gather sticks to help stage the area.

We discussed the how's and why's of what we were doing as I worked setting the trap and securing the drowning rod.

Each kid got to decide how and where they wanted theirs to go. The principles we had learned through trial and error from the previous season had stuck and they were implementing those important lessons. About an hour later we were done and heading home.

The next morning the kids didn't waste any time getting ready. We parked the pickup, put on our waders along with a pack frame, and followed the familiar path to the water.

The moment they realized our trap was missing and could see a dark shadow beneath the water, they erupted in celebration. Hollering to me, "We got one!"

Sage hopped into the water with her waders and reached through the surface searching for the rod. She lifted the trap out, showing us the fruit of our labor. Sawyer, my 9-year-old son, and my youngest daughter, Dillyn, took off along the river's edge to our next set with anticipation. Once again there was a burst of excitement. Both of them declaring we had another successful catch. It was more exhilarating than opening presents on Christmas morning.

I never would have imagined this would be my lifestyle. I'm sincerely grateful to be able to say that it is. I see our family growing closer, learning together, celebrating our victories and overcoming our obstacles as a team. Trapping has done that for us and we look forward to making more memories on our adventures together.

By Rachel Doble 🦌



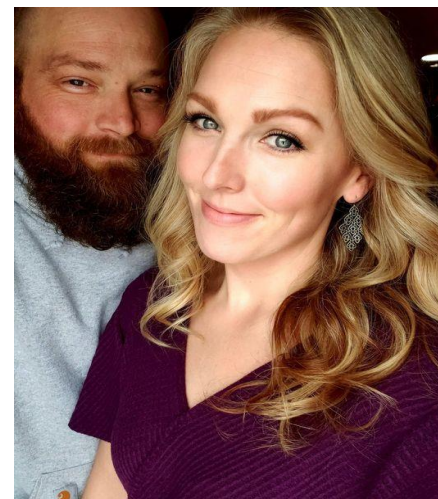
Home schooling also means outdoor classes to some families. Sage, Sawyer and Dillyn might just have the best school in Montana.



Who could ask for a better Mom. This is how best friends are made.

Editor's note.

Each year we see trapper numbers fluctuate, we lose a few but gain at times. Across the nation women are getting involved more and more in the outdoors and trapping. Sometimes just to ride along with husbands, dads, boyfriends or families. Some start



out at an early age with family while others in their later years. Some even on their own or with friends. It can be for many reasons or just to experience to see what it-s all about. No matter how it happens, women are always welcome to join in and lots of opportunities abound for guidance.

I have the utmost respect for Rachel and her family. Having met Rachel for the first time at a fur clinic I was impressed with her and the family. The kids are great and husband, Josh was supportive. Following her on Facebook proves just how dedicated she is to her family and the outdoors. Her trapping success is already above most of the rest of us. The number of followers on Facebook is awesome.

Her contribution to trapping is mentoring to many younger women, giving them courage and determination to try something different. I am sure that she will add other women and a lot of men to traditions of trapping. Thanks Rachel for all you do !!

By Tom Fieber 🦌

WE PROMOTE AND PRESERVE FUR HARVESTING AND ITS HERITAGE IN MONTANA AS BOTH A SPORT AND AN INDUSTRY THROUGH EDUCATION AND REGULATORY ACTIVISM. WE SUPPORT FUR HARVESTING AS A SUSTAINABLE USE TOOL FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT, AND FIGHT TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE WILDLIFE AND HABITAT. WE WORK WITH MT FWP TO SUPPORT THEIR MANAGEMENT GOALS.

Activities*****

Active with FWP shaping regulations that shape our trapping.

Trapper Education

Booths at Family Forestry Expo

School Shows

Northwest Montana Expo

Newsletters

Local County Fairs

Fur Handling Clinics

Public events

✘ Montana Fur Harvesters represents Trapper, Houndsmen and Predator Hunters

✘ Consider becoming a member of The Montana Trappers Association and The National Trappers Association. Every dollar raised will help to fight for trappers across the nation. Go online to their websites to join.

Memberships run from January 1 to December 31

Please Complete this form and send to: MFH, PO Box 3481, Kalispell MT 59903

Please Print Clearly

Date ___/___/___

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please check one New Member Renewal Pro-rate for 2020 balance.

Sustaining Membership \$20.00 annual dues Junior (under 18) \$10.00 annual dues

Family Membership \$30.00 annual dues Charter Member \$100.00 annual dues

Add a magazine to your membership at a discounted price Trapper Post Magazine \$14.00

The Trapper \$12.00 Predator Extreme Free Trappers World \$13

Note: Check here to receive your Newsletter by Email Check here to have Newsletter mailed.

In Closing

Here are some of the comments that I have gotten from others. **Trap theft fines.** Seems that the fine for trap theft is \$135.00. It is absurd that someone is able to steal traps worth hundreds of dollars, take animals out of them and only be fined \$135.00. The amount of time spent on trying to protect the traps and place trail cameras only to have them stolen is hard on trappers and wardens. I can personally assure you that wardens are working hard to help protect us. If you have any traps stolen or disturbed contact them soon as possible.

In my case, twice we noticed footprints that didn't match ours going into our sets. Then soon after the traps and cameras were taken. I am sure that they were finding them and coming back later with bolt cutters. We did have photos of them riding in on snowmobiles but without traps showing no way to prove anything.

Keep an eye open for footprints and strange vehicles on your lines. Try to get license plate photos or numbers. I have since taken photos of people sitting in vehicles, and made sure they saw me doing it, whenever they seemed out of place. I think it worked in our case, I took a photo of a couple driving into one of our lines and after that we have had no more problems. I believe that most of this is coming from organized out-of-state groups, not other trappers.

Lynx Protection Zones. I called Neil Anderson, Region One Wildlife Manager, the other day. I was questioning why the Lynx Protection Zone was still in effect for that Region. It appears that Montana failed to defend a court case a few years back and agreed to settle a lawsuit. The National Trappers Association and the Montana Trappers Association wanted to defend against the lawsuit but FWP Legal Staff settled without allowing either to join the suit. Soon after the same groups filed the same thing in Idaho. There they did defend the suit in court and defeated the action with both trapping associations as partners.

My question is why are we still under that burden now. The answer I got was "The Canada lynx is protected under the Endangered Species Act as a threatened species". Our best chance is assumed to be to get the lynx

unlisted. We need to find out how Idaho deflected that argument. It seems to be a complicated with all kinds of government hurdles. Looks like a long-term battle.

Trail camera use for trapping. After a long discussion with several FWP wardens I was assured that use of all trail cameras including cellular trail cams was legal for trapping. As long as they are working every 48 hours they count as visually inspected.

Thousand-foot setbacks on private property concerns. Questions about notifying everyone within a thousand feet does not apply on private property. As noted in regulations it is confusing but enforcement has supported the landowner. FWP is working on wording in regulations.

Trapper Education is in legislative process at this time. I, at this time feel that it will be approved. The only issue I see is who is required to take the class. Amendment is being worked on at this time to clarify who needs to take the class. Hopefully trappers who have held licenses for years will be grandfathered in.

Place wolves on predator list is a bill that will be moving through the process as well. Wyoming has them listed as such in most of that state. I am sure that we will need additional support from our community to succeed.

Reimbursement for wolf harvest is a logical endeavor that would help offset the big investment that most trappers endure running a wolf line. Fuel cost, vehicles, 4-wheelers, snowmobiles, maintenance, traps, supplies, baits, lures, tools and many more are some of what we face. I doubt that there is any wolf trapper that is make a profit.

Remove wolf harvest quota for individuals is another thing that we should support. Our goal as trappers is to control and manage wolves to balance with the prey base. Only our very best trappers are able to reach our current quota of five, let's keep them out there doing what they do best.

Have a commission member for each Region. Montana is a large state with many geological differences and wildlife needs. I believe that each Region should have a say in how wildlife and habitat is managed. It is never more apparent then with wolf densities.

Have a good year and present a good image to the general public, come out and join us at our fur booths, **Tom** 

Montana Power Products not only sells great products but they have a full-service shop to repair and maintain your equipment. They are also great supporters of the sportsman community. Like ours and also Montana Sportsman for Fish & Wildlife with a ATV each year. Thanks from all of us.



POLARIS
OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

**Sales
Service
Parts**



**MONTANA
POWER PRODUCTS**

EST  1991

RONAN • HAMILTON • LIBBY

www.mtpowerproducts.com 406.676.5000

 Find us on facebook 

The future of Trapping is in good hands

Montana Fur Harvesters
PO Box 3481
Kalispell, MT 59903
mtfurs@gmail.com

*Sage Doble, hard
at work in her
classroom*

**Montana Fur Harvesters
January 2021**

