

Winter News from the Montana  
Fur Harvesters

# MONTANA FUR HARVESTERS

January 2022

Winter issue 2022

**Montana's  
Rachel Doble  
of the Feral  
Academy**

**President's Message**

**Idaho fights lawsuit**

**Photo Essay**

**Bad Day on Wolf line**

**Wolf Snaring**

**Video Available**





## Montana Fur Harvesters

### 2022 Winter Magazine

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*Cover Photo: follow the adventures of Rachel Doble and their family, the Feral Academy. Below: Larry Ratray with another wolf from Region 2.*



## Notes from the president.

### Winter in Northwest Montana

The holidays are upon us. Made it through Thanksgiving, was lucky to get my wolf traps out on November 29<sup>th</sup>. Now getting ready for Christmas and spending time with family. Picked up a bobcat and a wolf right off the start, missed a few other wolves. Deep snows are in my trapping area now and the freeze thaw cycles have started. Make sure you have joined the Foundation for Wildlife Management to be eligible for the \$500 reimbursement.

Most of the state has now opened for wolf trapping on the 21<sup>st</sup>. To the best of my knowledge, not a single grizzly bear has been caught in a wolf trap ever. The ones I am aware of were caught in a coyote set in November or bobcat set in early December. Not that it can't happen but for ten years none have been after the 15<sup>th</sup> of December. Not a single fatality from a trapper, almost all known grizzly fatalities are either euthanized problem bears by government agencies or vehicle incidents.

I have never seen a time when trapping regulations have been so hard to follow. With all the new legislative changes and MTFWP regulations on top of what the commissioners have gone through, it is no wonder. I have spent hundreds of hours working with FWP personnel and commissioners trying to follow changes. Even our game wardens have a hard time interpreting how to enforce everything. I keep saying to all, consult your local game warden as to how they interpret the regulations, not all are the same.

Now the antis have filed a suit against the state of Idaho over Grizzly Bear and Lynx Protection. If our own FWP" legal department would have fought the same lawsuit years ago that Idaho had won, we would not have put Idaho back in the courts. My hope is that Montana would join in the suite with Idaho and fight this absurd challenge. Perhaps this is going in the right direction,

Wyoming, Idaho and Montana have forged a pact aimed at moving Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bears off the federal threatened species list and allowing hunting by addressing flaws a court found in an earlier delisting effort. The tri-state agreement also would ensure genetic diversity of the isolated Yellowstone grizzly community by moving two bears from outside the ecosystem into the area by 2025 if no natural migration occurs by then.

Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte is petitioning the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to lift Endangered Species Act protections for more than a thousand grizzly bears in northwest Montana. "We worked on grizzly bear recovery for decades. We were successful and switched to a focus on conflict management years ago," Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks director Hank Worsech said in a [release](#). "We've shown the ability to manage bears, protect their habitat and population numbers. It's time for us to have full authority for grizzly bears in Montana."

Grizzlies are increasingly moving beyond the boundaries of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem and [creating conflict](#), particularly along the Rocky Mountain Front and east into the prairies, part of their historic range. I also have seen a huge increase in size of the Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone. It now has expanded and renamed into the "In or near occupied grizzly bear habitat". It now runs from Canada to the entire Yellowstone system and most of Western Montana.

Until we get the grizzly bear delisted the antis will use it to push more restrictions. Remember, the people that we elect determines what happens in the future. It is very important to know how candidates will vote on sportsmen's rights before you vote them into offices. This coming year is also an election year so all races will be very important.

We finally started the process of creating the Mandatory Trapper Education Class. For some reason it was delayed until the start of the wolf trapping season. Fellow MTA members, Bob Shepard, John Nolan and I are representing trappers and FWP is represented by Jim Williams, Kevin Heinle and Jon Obst. Wayne Cooperider is our facilitator. An online class with an in-person field day is in the works, so far. Great group to work with. We are working under a very tight timeline and hope to have it in place by spring. These meetings are open to the public so keep an eye open for dates and locations, be nice to outnumber the antis.

Our Wolf Snaring Education Video on Avoiding By-catches has been shown to over 400 prospective wolf snaring trappers. The video has been sold in multiple states as well. Evening classes were held in a dozen local communities and in online FWP Wolf Certification Classes. The video is available to all. You can contact me at [tfieber@bresnan.net](mailto:tfieber@bresnan.net) to order a copy. The cost is \$20 plus \$5 for shipping. Cliff at C&S Sales in Victor also carries the video and is selling snares that are legal for Montana. Give Cliff a call at 406-642-3293.



As of January 10<sup>th</sup>, Wolves harvested in Montana is 156. No region has reached the commission review numbers. Region 3 has the most harvests at 64. Regions 1 is at 46 and Region 2 is at 36 parts of Region 1 did not start until December 21st so hope those numbers climb. I would like to say that I am looking forward to checking wolf traps but! One of my lines is buried under 3 feet of snow and I



have been shoveling to keep it working. Bad thing it is in the valley floor. Thirty five miles away to the east the snow is only six inches deep and those are fine. Just stuck my pickup on a snow packed

road that took two and a half hours to dig it out. Wouldn't been so bad if it wasn't a eight foot drop to a creek bottom. Like I tell others, you never know what is going to happen on the trapline each day. Plans seldom work out.

February and March are coming fast. Sportsmen Expos, gun shows, fur clinics, banquets are all on the agenda. We are always looking for help running these events so please check with us if you want to help. I'd like to shout out to Brad James and Mort Hill from Columbia Falls for their outstanding work at the Flathead Fair in August.

Best of wishes for the new year.

**Tom Fieber** 🐾

## Montana Foundation for Wildlife Management Chapters

are planning on hosting banquets for this year. We have already started; Kalispell's Chapter banquet date is March 12<sup>th</sup>. It will be held at the Flathead County Fairgrounds. It will give us more room to host a larger crowd. Our past volunteers did a great job putting all of this together. The Sanders County Chapter is scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup>.

Justin Webb is a dedicated leader that guided us to very successful banquets.

I am glad that we decided to join Idaho's group and take advantage of their expertise.`1

A special thanks to Secretary, Mort Hill who kept up with almost all the donations and paperwork. Josh and Tristan Jurek came all the way from Plains to publish event books and donation displays. There is no way to mention all who worked so hard on making this come together. I made many new friends in the process.

The Flathead Chapter did meet on January 12<sup>th</sup> and elected new officers, so the ball is rolling. The meeting was well attended. Everything felt comfortable with experience from last years banquet being carried forward.



## FOUNDATION FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

*Ensuring ungulate populations recover in areas negatively impacted by wolves*

We will be needing volunteers to help make this a successful event. Attending these meetings is very helpful, our next meeting is on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, call me at 250-3386 for more information.

This beautiful display at the Flathead banquet was provided by Mel Siefke of Wildlife Recapture in Libby.







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**This is the second black wolf in a row. Both were very prime pelts. Only eight more to go.**

Tom Fieber 🐾

## Idaho Trappers Association

This is my monthly president report that goes out to the three national magazines. I thought you would all like to read it early. Hope to see all of you at the fur sale on January 13-16. We are still looking for volunteers to help on Thursday to set up and Sunday to break it down. We are also looking for any donations you can bring to auction off to off-set the cost of putting the fur sale on. Donations can be anything from tanned fur, raw fur, lure, old traps, handmade items, canned jellies, practically anything! Thank you  
 Rusty Kramer  
 208-870-3217

## Hello from Snowy Idaho,

I'm a couple days late writing this December report but always seems like I'm behind writing my reports. We have been getting dumped on here in southern Idaho and I currently have 2 1/2 feet of snow

and snowing hard. I don't mind the snow much here at the house because I am a watermaster and farmer, but it makes cat trapping tough. Slogging through knee deep snow and waist deep drifts digging out traps check after check takes a little of the fun out of cat trapping but hey it's still trapping!

Dec 8th - 11th I wore my NTA hat and went to Little Rock, Arkansas to the NASCA summit. National Assembly of Sportsmen Caucuses meet in a new location every year. The NTA and FTA were sponsors of the event and we had a booth set up and a trapping event at the end of the event where we went out on an actual beaver line. I met a lot of legislators all over the US during these days and everyone wanted to talk wolves. There is tremendous support nationwide on Idaho's wolf management plan. I talked at length with Arizona and Colorado legislators on the issues they would have with no foothold trapping on public land. It was an amazing experience and please check out the more in-depth article about this event in the American Trapper.

On the subject of wolves, the grizzly/lynx federal lawsuit has a lot of people calling me wondering what ITA is doing with it. ITA along with National Trappers Association and the Fur Takers of America are going to be official interveners in this case. We have multiple organizations and groups that have personally told me they will support us through this lawsuit. The lynx lawsuit 5 years ago was a huge financial hit on our group. I strongly feel we have a lot more allies this time around. I don't want to talk a tremendous amount in print about strategy (I'm sure antis get this newsletter as well), I assure you we are "all in" defending trapping in Idaho!

Furbearer and wolf trapping changes have been submitted to the IDFG and will be discussed at the January and March commission meetings. Not a lot of huge changes but we requested some beaver and otter closures get opened, raising personal otter quota, and raising two regional otter quotas. As always, we are working for all of you in the state and I have testified at every IDFG commission season setting meeting since becoming president. If you are wanting trapping rule or seasons changed, please contact me or a board member.

By the time you read this, the fur sale will be already done and over with. I always forget how much work it takes leading up to the fur sale. My phone has been blowing off the hook with calls about the fur sale and the lawsuit. If I don't return a call in a timely fashion, please don't take offense, and call me again in a day

or two. My voicemail fills up frequently and people forget I do have regular job and traps to check.

2022 Sustaining membership patches are in and this cross-fox patch is one of the best patches I have ever seen. The picture was from an actual cross fox that my dad caught in one of his bobcat sets 15 years ago. Sustaining membership program was a smashing success last year with 139 members. Sustaining membership is a way to give a "little extra" to the ITA, get your name listed in our magazine and get a fantastic collectible patch. Sustaining memberships can be bought for \$25 on our website or mailing in a check to ITA PO Box 256 Fairfield Idaho 83327.

Thank you

Rusty Kramer

Idaho Trappers Association President

208-870-3217



## Montana trappers have lost a great

**member** of our trapping community. Fran Buell has been a leading force in trapper education for years here in Montana. Jim and Fran spent endless days and miles taking their trapping booths to shows across the State. She will be missed but her work will carry on.

### *IN PASSING*



**F**rances Marie "Fran" Buell, 73, of Guildford, MT, passed away on October 12, 2021, surrounded by her loving family. Fran was born on December 3, 1947, in Havre, MT, to Theodore and Ann Madsen. Fran was a loving mother, grandmother, wife, and friend. She was born and raised in the Highline area.

Fran graduated from Havre High School in 1966. In 1967, she married Anthony Albanito and their marriage brought forth three children. They later divorced in 1978. In 1981, Fran married James "Jim" Buell and became the mother to his four children, for a new total of seven children in the family. ❖

**F**ran was the education coordinator for the MTA for more than 20 years. She worked with others and upgraded the education manual at least two different times as more info became available. She kept the records of all the folks that took the MTA education class and sent out certificates of completion. Fran helped start the trapper instructor certification and kept the records of certified instructors. Fran was on the committee that worked with the FWP on the layout for mandatory trapper education in MT. She and Jim were the folks that started and carried the Youth Trapper Camp for 21 years. Fran and Jim were the push and carry at all the sports shows in Mt. for many years. She reached thousands of people with the truth of trapping. Fran was also instrumental on the History and Ethics committee for the MTA.

Bob Sheppard



**This is a sight that makes all the work, year around, worthwhile !**



**Attending seminars, clinics, trapping demonstrations and picking up tips and new tactics helps to shorten the learning curve. Prepping traps, checking equipment, servicing vehicles prior to starting the season are time consuming. Scouting the lines, learning new pack habits as well as avoiding other users are important. Of utmost importance is leaning the regulations and laws. There is probably no other species that is so tightly controlled than wolves. Even reading the printed regulations is no longer enough. Changes are now modified up to opening of the season. Then comes setting traps, baiting, logging locations and checking the lines. It is more than just trapping season!**



## Montana Fur Harvesters Memberships are due this month.

It has been a good year for the Fur Harvesters. Our membership has grown, our budget has increased, and we have reached out to thousands of new people through our fur shows. Some of these new members have taken on tasks and excelled. Looking forward to a new year working with all concerned. I will be sending out forms soon or see page 13 to renew or join.

**Tom Fieber** 🐾

## News from the Feral Academy

Rachel Doble

**O**ur trapping season started off with a nuisance pest removal assignment for our three homeschool kids.

After seeing several photos of us trapping on social media, a friend reached out and asked if we would be able to help her with a raccoon problem she had been dealing with at her house and the adjacent property. She knew that Sage, Sawyer & Dillyn all looked forward to going out to set and check traps, so she was more than happy to give them the chance to demonstrate their knowledge on the species she was struggling with. They had been learning about coon trapping through guys like Alan Probst from The North American Trapper and from articles in the Fur, Fish & Game magazine so they were thrilled to be able to go apply their knowledge on the subject in the field.



Early the next morning each kid cooperated to help get breakfast made and the chores done so we could load up our gear and go to the newly anticipated raccoon location.

They were given a few dog-proof cooncuffs from a few of their trapping heroes and mentors, Paul Antczak & Dan Helterline. So after filling their bellies they ran out the door to gather up their gear then hopped in the backseat of our trapping pickup. On the way over we stopped by the store for the secret bait, rainbow colored mini marshmallows.

When we got there, my friend met us outside to explain where she had been having the coon activity. From there, we let the kids assess the terrain and decide where the best locations would be. We only had 5 traps, so it didn't take long to set but you know how kids are, it took more time and they had to snack on the marshmallows!



The next morning was a beautiful Fall Day to go on our first official trap check of the season. Each kid willingly participated in our morning routine and then made their way into the pickup with the necessary gear. Dillyn, our youngest daughter had just turned eight and for her birthday she got her first firearm. A blue and gray

laminate wood stock .22 Cricket. So of course, she made sure we had it in case we needed to dispatch a raccoon. On the drive over my phone buzzed with a message. In the bushes of the photo I was sent, was a little masked bandit, tangled in the brush with his wrist caught by the cuff. The message stated, "You've got at least two!"



The kids grew loud and restless when I announced that we had confirmed coon catches. Even though it was just on the other side of town, the kids spilled out like they had been on an eight-hour, cross-country road trip. Josh and I weren't too far behind them as they ran through the gate and on to the first sets. A large female coon was perched on a wooden post overlooking the river. She took cover in the thick grass along the fence line when the kids approached. They were loud with excitement and arguing who got to be the first to dispatch the raccoons.

Ultimately it was decided that Dillyn would get to be the first since it was her .22 rifle she should get to claim its first kill.

Our friend was standing by enjoying the discussion and excitement of it all when Dillyn declared she had named the raccoon. With that



Rachel Doble 🐾

### Upcoming Events:

Our Fur Shows will be starting soon, the first one will be the Montana Sportsman's Expo. The Dates are February 25-27, 2022. This is a great show to start the year on. On March 25-27, 2022 the Kalispell Gun Show will be held at the Majestic Arena. This is a show where we have lots of Raffle ticket sales.

I just picked up our Rifle for this year's raffle. We were able to get the ever-popular Smith&Wesson AR-15 Super Kit MOE. **Westland Seed of Ronan** has assisted in procuring these for us. The last two years they were not available so its nice to have them again. We have sold out of tickets in the past years, we started with 600 then went to 700. I suggest that we go for 800 tickets this year.

Fur clinics are also popular, As of now, the Flathead clinic is scheduled for the 3rd of April at Shawn and Amber Meuli's place at 287 Midnight Ln, Columbia Falls, starting at 9:00 am.

Mandatory Trapper Education Classes will be coming this season. Some trappers will be required to take them. Check with FWP Regulations. Our committee has started setting up the format and hope to have it ready this spring. We are looking for trappers to get certified to teach classes. Contact fwp.



being said, I can't recall the name she chose. I do however remember how wide eyed my friend was when Dillyn stepped closer to the fence, gave the nod that she was ready then raised her Cricket and tipped the cute little trouble maker over!

For the next week, Feral Academy did work at her house, taking three coons the first check, two more the next day, two more the day after that, and on the last day one more large coon, totaling eight.

My friend was appreciative and impressed with their skillset, and I was, am a proud trapping mom!




**Montana Fur Harvesters** works closely with local FWP personnel. Game warden, Jon Obst, is one of the first to work with trappers and is a valued asset to the trapping community. He knows trapping, regulations, how traps function, what trappers are dealing with.

Wildlife biologist, Jessy Coltrane, has been heading up the fisher denning box project in the Cabinet Mountains. She has been great to work with and is a hard worker herself. Wildlife manager for region one, Neil Anderson, he has been another one that attends public meetings and sportsman events. He has been working to address road and trail issues as well as other issues that affect sportsman. Neil really listens to people's concerns and acts on them. These are just a few of the many local personnel that I work with and appreciate.

**Thanks to each and every one of them!**

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## Legal reimbursement for wolf harvest.

Larry Rattray harvested a wolf with me on our line at the end of December. As members of the F4WM he turned in papers for reimbursement but found out that they wanted to be sure that each wolf is not being claimed more than once. Justin Webb, F4WM said that they had a guy in Idaho try to turn in the same wolf three times. This could be a big problem for both states that we need to address.

Justin stated that in a meeting with FWP Director,

Hank  
Worsech  
suggested  
that W4WM  
demand that

the entire carcass be required. Problem with that is Montana regulations don't require the carcass, only the hide and skull be checked in within 10 days after harvest. Montana reporting form for wolves only has a check box for, (Was carcass presented). Be sure to have tagging official write in that (hide and skull were presented) if carcass was not saved. This is a problem that MT FWP needs to work with us on.

We need to come up with a way to tattoo, punch, stain or something that could permanently identify each wolf harvested that is turned in for reimbursement. We will be working on this soon.

So far, we have two wolves eligible for reimbursement and it was fast. It proved that the program works, we need to get more people aware of the benefits.



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These Photos by  
Carrie Franklin  
*A Moment's Reflection Photography*  
[amomentsreflection@gmail.com](mailto:amomentsreflection@gmail.com)





# Wolf snaring Regulations 2021

These new regulations are still being interrupted by game wardens as questions arise. Be sure to consult your local wardens for their interpretations. As you will learn in classes some minimums are over what we feel are needed and can be lessened. However, page 14 of regulations state, locks to release at 350 pounds, it is not in step with the 1000 pound minimum requirement.

Note that page # are from the Wolf Regulations book.

Page 2 Trapping • **Snares are now legal for trapping wolves, except in federally designated grizzly bear recovery zones.** Additional snare regulations are listed on page 6. • The trapping season in grizzly bear recovery zones starts on December 15, but could be adjusted to as early as November 29 based on conditions. Check FWP website for any adjustments. • WMU 313 is closed to wolf trapping in the Deckard Flats to Trail Creek Wolf Trapping Closure Area. • Wolf trap pan tension must be at least 10 pounds in Regions 1,2,3,4, and 5. • Trappers must immediately dispatch a trapped wolf by gunshot – unless otherwise authorized not to do so by FWP prior to wolf-trapping efforts. Regulations Adopted by F

Page 2&3 **Relaxing Snare** –Wolf Hunting & Trapping Regulations Visit [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov) 3 snare loop to release constriction pressure on the captured animal when the cable is not taut (e.g., when the animal stops pulling, it will loosen). **This means that the locking device on the snare cable operates both ways allowing the snare cable to move back and forth to some degree.** Locks that only close or that use springs or other powering devices to hold them closed are not considered relaxing snares. See page 15 for examples of relaxing snares. Trap (MCA 87-6-101) – to take or harvest or participate in the taking or harvesting of any wildlife protected by the laws of the state by setting or placing any mechanical device, snare, deadfall, pit, or device intended to take wildlife or to remove wildlife from any of these devices.

Page 4 **Exposed Carcass or Baiting (CR)** – Baiting is allowed for the hunting of wolves. **No trap or snare may be set within 30 feet of an exposed carcass or bait that is visible from above.**

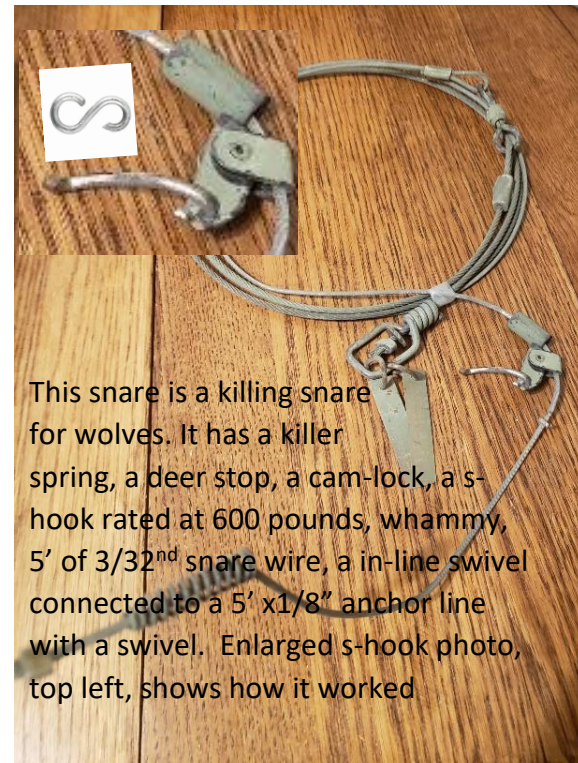
Page 6 **Occupied Dwellings (CR)** – **Killing ground sets, including all snares, set for animals larger than ground**

squirrels are unlawful within 1,000 feet of an occupied dwelling without written notification to the inhabitant. Snares (CR) - Snaring is permitted on public and private lands consistent with trapping season dates, with the exception of those areas federally designated as Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones. Trap Identification (MCA-87-6-601(1)(a)) - A person may not use a trap or snare for the purpose of trapping or snaring a fur-bearing animal, a predatory animal, or a nongame species unless: the trap or snare is tagged with a numbered metal device identifying tag bearing an individual identifying number issued by the department or the owner's name, and address, and telephone number unless the person is trapping or snaring on the person's land or an irrigation ditch right-of-way contiguous to the person's land.

Snares must be equipped with a loop stop that will close to a loop no smaller than 2.5 inches in diameter (stop placed at no less than 8 inches from end of loop). Snares must have a breakaway device rated at 1,000 lbs. or less installed on the loop end. Snares must be placed such that the bottom of the snare loop is at least 18 inches above the surface. Power-assisted (e.g., spring-loaded) snare locks are prohibited on wolf snares on public lands. A relaxing snare lock is required on snares in lynx protection zones (LPZs). Snares may not be used in federally designated Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones.

Page 14 **Breakaway Snares**  
Following are examples of commercially manufactured breakaway lock designs that meet regulation requirements to release at 350 pounds of force or less for fur bearers: Not wolves •

Amberg Lock with release ferrule • Gregerson Lock Snares • Snare Shop - N. D. Lock and Stop • Breakaway J-Hooks • Breakaway S-Hooks • Thompson Snares -  
(continued on page 15)





**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.**

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**Booths at Family Forestry Expo**

**School Shows**

**Northwest Montana Expo**

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**Local County Fairs**

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**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.**

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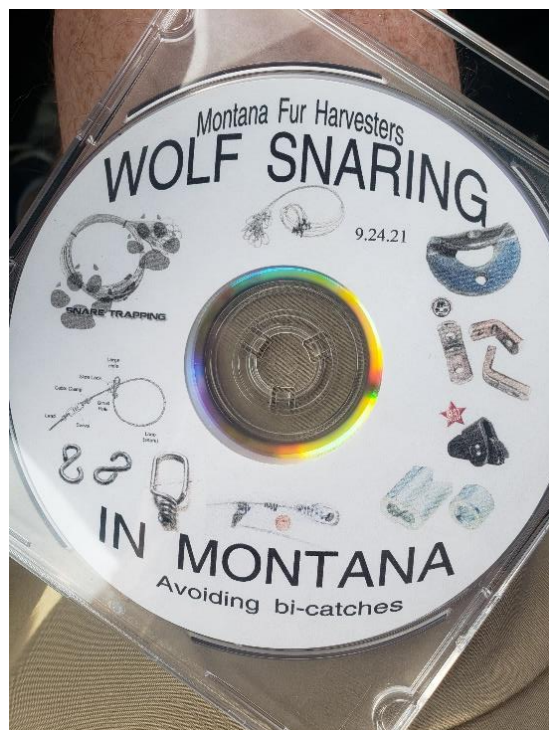
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Note: ☐ Check here to receive your Newsletter by Email ☐ Check here to have Newsletter mailed.

Thompson Release Lock For information on dealers of breakaway lock devices and snares, contact the FWP State Furbearer Coordinator at 406-444-0042.

**Relaxing Snares** A relaxing snare has a lock that allows the snare loop to loosen when an animal stops pulling against it. Below is a partial list of locks that are commercially available through snare and trap dealers and are considered relaxing locks, if they are not modified and are assembled with the appropriate snare cable diameter. Any alteration of a lock from its manufactured condition may affect performance ,and again, the cable size must match the lock to avoid the cable from becoming bound up at the lock. • Relax-A-Lock • Dakota Line's Low Pro • Relaxing Washer Lock • Quarter Washer Lock • Berkshire Washer Lock. As noted earlier, **some of these will need to be addressed.** At no time do we agree that "**manufactured breakaway lock designs that meet regulation requirements to release at 350 pounds of force or less:**" (That requirement is for furbearers, not wolves.)



This very popular video is a must see for anyone thinking of snaring in Montana. I have sent them out to Alaska, Idaho and Montana. If you can't make one of your local classes, at least take time to view this before you start buying or making snares. It could save you money from buying wrong supplies or worse making a bad set.

**To purchase a video:** Pick one up at a local class for \$20 and save \$5 postage. Send a **check** for \$25 in the mail to, Tom Fieber, 507 Bayview Dr, Polson Mt 59860. For **Credit Card** sales at \$25. Send me your contact info then call me at 406-250-3386 **Tom Fieber** 🐾

## Thanks to The Meuli's of Columbia Falls

A special thanks to Shawn and Amber Meuli of Columbia Falls. They donated frozen beaver pelts to the Fur Harvesters. The pelts were skinned but needed to be fleshed and stretched. There was a bunch of them so we decided it would be a good way to educate people. We setup a Fur Handling Clinic in October, at their shop and brought in others to help process the furs. Worked out well, the pelts were ready to dry and will be sent in to be tanned. These pelts will be sold at fur shows and proceeds will go towards protecting trapper rights.

Tom Fieber 🦊

**This is known as a bad day on a wolf line. Unfortunately, it happens. Note the amount of wolf tracks over the traps. The scented post in the photo is the center of three wolf traps. After a deep snow fall the traps failed to fire due to the depth. The**



**traps below the snow were all working in the waxed sand, but the depth of the snow didn't allow them to fire. This was the second time they visited the set, first time a trap fired but missed the wolf. We dug off the snow and the wolves returned a few weeks later and we caught one. Third times a charm!**



**Permission to Trappers.** We have the opportunity to obtain permission to trap on private land in Montana. This is a very valuable tool in the wolf trapping toolbox. Restrictions on private lands are nowhere near as strict as on public lands. Trying to pull wolves 150' from a public road can be very difficult. Even though we trap both public and private lands, our success rates drop dramatically on public.

Over the years we try to foster a very positive relationship with landowners. Approach landowners in a considerate manner and thank them for taking the time to talk to you even if they don't grant permission. If they do grant permission, ask them what species you can target and where and how they prefer you travel. Show the utmost respect for land and ecosystem. Permissions have been lost because someone didn't leave a gate as found, driving across fields leaving ruts, littering, or leaving traps after the season. Make sure that snaring is ok before you set them, some owners are against them.

We always try to keep them up to date on how we are doing. Many of the landowners are very supportive of what we do. Some make sure that they plow parking spots for vehicles, watch for wolf sign, invite us in for a cup of coffee and keep us informed. Many times, they will refer us to another landowner who wants trapping on their land. Many times, they have convinced a owner who declined permission to later ask us to come in.

Never be rude to a landowner, always be respectful and your chances to harvest a wolf will increase as well as make a new friend.

**Good luck on your lines and stay safe. Tom Fieber**





Montana Fur Harvesters  
PO Box 3481  
Kalispell MT 59903

Sargent Game Warden,  
Jon Obst of Region One.  
Education Instructor.

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, Montana Sportsman for Fish & Wildlife with an ATV each year and the Foundation For Wildlife Management. Thanks, from all of us.



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