

MONTANA FUR HARVESTERS

OCT 2023
FALL issue

**ARE WOLVERINE
POPULATIONS REALLY
DECLINING?**

Harvest Quotas on Wolves ?

**Reimbursement for
Wolf Harves Expense**

President's Message

Prepping for trapping Season

Meet our members!

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Montana Fur Harvesters

2023 Fall Magazine

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Cover Photo, Wolverine,
how are they doing? See page 5.

Carrie Franklin captures
some wonderful wildlife shots.



Photo by A Moments Reflection by Carrie Franklin

Notes from the president.

Fall in Northwest Montana.

As summer turns to fall, things really start to get busy around here. Fall was always my favorite time of year. The weather was cooling down, our Indian summers are beautiful. Archery season starts and the bull elk are bugling. Steelhead were running in Idaho. Small mouth bass are starting to school up for the winter leading to massive catches.

Can't believe it but, we are starting to work on banquets already. **The Rockin WK Banquet** this spring was another good fund-raising event. Tim Viano did a good job of putting it on at the Expo Building at the Flathead Fair Grounds. Looking forward to working with Tim for this year's event. The **Foundation 4 Wildlife Management** group from Kalispell is hosting meetings already. Making plans for the banquet coming up on January 27th at the Expo Building at the Fair Grounds. We will need volunteers to help run these events. Contact Scot Smith at 406-249-9951. See page 14 for more information.

Between the **F4WM** and the **Rockin WK** events we helped raise a lot of funds to reimburse sportsmen for legally harvested wolves. Be sure to update your memberships before the wolf season starts.

Trapper Ed Classes took place this summer. We held an R1 Class on June 3rd at the FWP Office in Kalispell. Information Officer, Dillon Tabish had everything lined up and ready for us when we arrived that morning. We had nine instructors that did an awesome job at each station. Around 30 students were certified at the end of the day. On July 8th we were in Missoula putting on another class for R2 at the FWP office. These are long days, instructors show up at 6:30, students at 7:30, class starts at 8:00am. Students leave at 5:00 and Instructors leave at 6:00pm. We have some good instructors that have taught multiple classes. We are still looking for additional trappers that would be interested in becoming an instructor. Contact Dillon Tabish at FWP or myself and we can get you started. Our fall class in Kalispell was awesome. We ended up certifying 53 students that day. I believe this was the largest

class that we had in the state so far. Our instructors from Region One are awesome! The class went very well, again Dillon did a great job organizing the day. Thanks to all that make this happen.

Wolf Quotas

Remember last issue when just when I thought that we could relax for a while on changes to trapping regulations. For some reason the Commission was planning on reducing the harvest quota on wolves statewide. Reducing the harvest quota to last year's harvest, even though we never met any of the set quotas. Seems that panic set in because the estimated population dropped by 44 animals from the year before to 1,143 in 2021.

The estimated wolf population for 2022 was 1,087 wolves. This is down 44 wolves from 1,143 in 2021. The number of wolf packs was 181, down 10 packs from 2021. The total wolf harvest for the spring and fall of calendar year 2022 was 248. FWP website lists 258 harvested in 2023. I myself have not seen a reduction of wolves in our trapping area. Some pack sizes are smaller, but we still have three packs that average over 10 each. I did not want to see quotas reduced in R1 or R2.

Well as it turned out, I set up meetings in regions 1 & 2 prior to the August commission meeting with FWP to discuss the reasons for the quota. Our members showed up and questioned our speakers. I personally felt that their data and intentions were misguided. FWP personnel from Helena and regional offices explained how they came up with those decisions. Then those attending we allowed to ask questions and bring up points. The meetings were run live on the internet for those who couldn't attend.

The intent of the legislature was to increase the harvest of wolves to help reduce the population.

A commission member was in attendance and a letter from legislator, Paul Fielder, was read expressing the legislative intent. Members of the Montana Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife were present and expressed their opposition. Vice President of Montana Trapping Association, Chris Morgan, sent a great letter explaining their stance on the subject, it was also read. At the end of each meeting, I asked the crowd if anyone agreed with the change to the quota. Only one attendee raised his hand, he asked to repeat the question.

At the end of the meetings, we thanked FWP for taking time to attend the meetings and

explain why they felt it necessary to push for the restricted quota. After the meetings I had many comments from those who attended that felt that it was a waste of their time. I felt that was not the case. Some of the comments from those in FWP left us some room.

Scott Smith and I went to Helena for the commission meeting to speak on our behalf. We were met by the usual anti's and had to listen to their comments about how awful trappers were.

At the start of the trapping session, Commissioner Tabor proposed an amendment to increase the quota of Region 1 from 120 to 131 wolves. He also proposed the commission reconvene should regions 1-3 get to within 25% of their entire quota. He left it open ended as to why he proposed this, but my take on it is so the commission could decide on whether or not to close the season or to extend the quota.

Commissioner Burrows proposed an amendment to increase the quota of Region 2 from 91 to 104. Despite numerous suggestions by the antis to have a wolf advisory committee, the department chose not to go that direction. The total minimum increase of wolves to the quota for the



upcoming season is 24. It may not seem like much, but this is definitely a considerable win given the alternative the department was proposing.

Tom Fieber 🐾

From **Chris Morgan**

With your help, and with the hard work of our friends at Montana Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, Montana Fur Harvesters, F4WM, and the Outdoor Heritage Coalition we were able to make the best of this situation.

I cannot express my thanks to you and the 120 some others who took the time to share your

comments prior to the meeting. There's no doubt your comments helped tip the scales in our favor. If there's anything I can do to repay you for your effort or attempt to represent you better, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks,

Chris Morgan
Montana Trapper's Association
VP West



Photo by A Moments Reflection by Carrie Franklin

WOLVERINES TRAVEL

Some years ago, a bad-ass wolverine mountaineer was collared and tracked expanding his territory from the east side of Montana's Glacier National Park into Canada. When this two-year-old bumped up against the turf of a long-established male it took it over, claimed the older guy's female and kept right on enlarging his crown-of-the-continent empire. The older male had grown thin and scruffy, he wandered away southward, never to be seen again.

Shortly afterward, the yearling son of the older male and female, turned up in one of our Glacier Wolverine Project's log box traps. Judging from the bloody gash on his face, he, too, had run into Mr. Bad-ass. The team patched him up a bit before turning him loose. Across the Divide, Alex "Buck" Hasson was wintering alone in a cabin, skiing out to keep tabs on several radioed wolverines on the park's west side. To locate a signal, he usually had to go for miles. But early one morning, he stepped from the outhouse to find the same gulo 40 feet away.

Buck tracked the wandering male 30 miles southwest to a mountain ridge overlooking the town of Columbia Falls, then west into the Whitefish Range. He was headed up the backside of the ski area now known as Whitefish Mountain Resort. After talking the ski patrol into letting him ride the chairlift to the summit with them, Buck used his radio antenna to fix the location atop the next peak over. The wolverine was feasting on a deer carcass, Buck later learned from an avid out-of-bounds skier. The bad-ass padded 90 miles farther west to the Idaho-Montana border. Before winter was



scavenger's story came to an end.

out, the hunter-

SURVEYS HAVE BEEN GOING ON FOR



YEARS ON WOLVERINES.

Population levels have remained level from past surveys. Over the years I have personally seen four wolverines. Three were in the Mission Mountains and the last one was in the Snow Crest Range of Southwest Montana a few years ago. As I see it, there never has been a large population in North America. due to the fact that they spend most of their time at high elevations and deep snow, most of us don't get to see them. They have huge home ranges and are mostly loners. We are being told that listing is promoted by environmental groups because of global warming. Probably the same ones who said the grizzlies were going to starve because the white bark pine trees were dying. Polar bears would be gone because of melting sea ice. These animals have adapted to the changes not decimated.

Wolverine Occupancy and Monitoring

Wolverine have historically been trapped and hunted in Montana and were originally classified as a non-game species until their reclassified as a furbearer in 1984. In 1975, mandatory wolverine pelt tagging, and an annual wolverine harvest continued through the 2012 trapping season ending with a quota of 5. Since 2013, only 3 wolverines have been killed incidentally from legal trapping activities.



Over the winter of 2016–2017, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) participated in the first western United States wolverine occupancy survey which spanned across Idaho, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming (Lukacs et al. 2020). The objectives of these efforts were to 1) determine wolverine distribution, 2) identify distribution gaps where restoration efforts could be directed, 3) develop a monitoring framework that could be used to evaluate changes in distribution, occupancy and genetics, and 4) provide baseline data that can be used to evaluate the impacts of landscape, climatic, or anthropogenic changes on wolverine occupancy and genetics over time. Monitoring stations were deployed within 15-km x 15-km cells that have >50% modeled high-quality habitat. A total of 185 monitoring stations were deployed across this 4-state area for the 2016–2017 survey. Wolverines were detected in 59 of the cells, including 23 cells in Montana. This survey was then followed-up over the winter of 2021–2022 adding Colorado, Utah, and Oregon to detect any changes in overall distribution and occupancy compared to the results from the previous study and to get a baseline for other areas predicted to be occupied by wolverines (Figure 20).

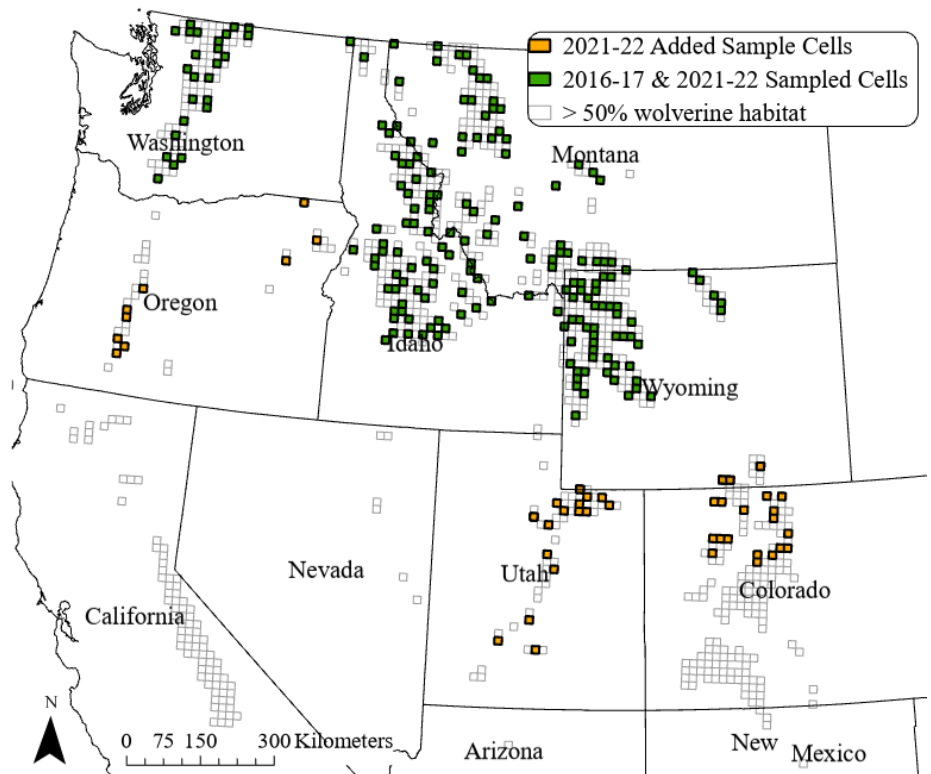


Figure 20. Sampling frame and selected cells for the wolverine survey across Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, USA, 2016–2017 (green) and selected cells added in Colorado, Utah, and Oregon, USA, for the survey in 2021–2022 (green & orange).

During the 2021–2022 survey, wolverines were detected in 60 of the 239 cells surveyed across the 7-state area although, this only added one wolverine detection in Oregon (Table 3; Figure 21). Wolverines were again detected in 59 of 185 cells sampled. There was a shift in wolverine detections between the two studies from Montana to Idaho, although the preliminary results only show a small decrease in overall wolverine occupancy across the 4-state area.

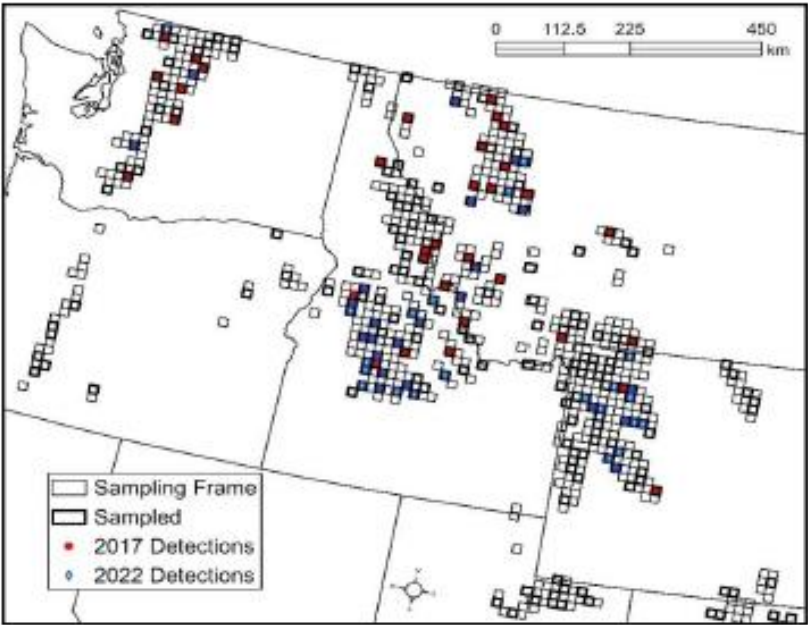
Wolverines are up for federal listing in 2023 due to the threat of climate change. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) plans to publish their final rule in December. Wolverines continue to be detected throughout the extent of their known range and have also been recently detected in areas previously thought to be outside of their normal distribution. The continued collaboration among these states will provide valuable, long-term information regarding any spatial and temporal changes in wolverine occupancy and distribution in the western United States. Through these efforts, managers can ensure the perpetuation of wolverine populations throughout the extent of their range. Occupancy surveys occur every 5 years with the next survey scheduled for the winter of 2026–2027. There are plans to expand these collaborative efforts

into Alberta and British Columbia, Canada so that this next survey can continue to provide advancing information about wolverines throughout much of their range in North America.

Figure 21. Wolverine detections across a 7-state area, USA, in winters of 2016–2017 and 2021–2022.

Table 3. Wolverine detections during 1 December to 31 March during 2021–2022 wolverine survey across the 4-state area and all participating states, USA.

State	Sites	Wolverine photos	Sites with wolverine detections	Total photos (all species)
Colorado	16	0	0	118,566
Idaho	58	12,752	25	108,679
Montana	48	6,291	16	60,331
Oregon	19	333	1	30,955
Utah	16	0	0	26,051
Washington	25	286	3	9,665*
Wyoming	55	5,026	15	127,554
Total	239	24,688	60	472,136
Total	185	24,355	59	296,564



Foundation 4 Wildlife Management, MONTANA TALKING POINTS

Montana has suitable habitat for and was directed to manage for 400 wolves by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in the 2009 delisting rule

F4WM promotes wolf harvest by reimbursing hunting and trapping members expenses, as well as through outreach and education.

F4WM Funded 54% of wolves harvested in MT last year (76% of Idaho’s)

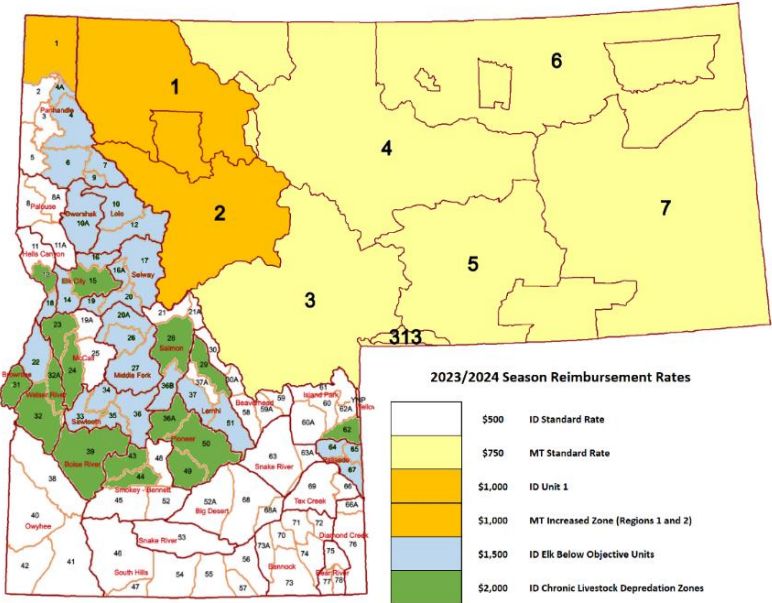
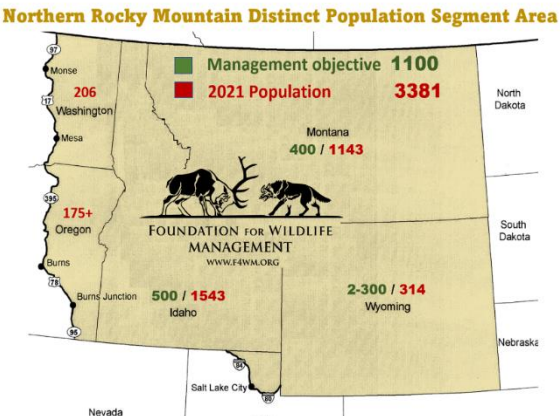
4 MT Chapters (Bitterroot, Sanders County, Lincoln County, Flathead Valley)

Last 2 seasons efforts by Sanders and Flathead generated enough funding to increase standard reimbursement rates in MT to \$750 statewide and \$1000 per wolf in regions 1 & 2

F4WM Leadership Testified on 10 Legislative bills this year that could have thwarted or promoted sportsmen ability to harvest wolves in MT

Attends Commission meetings to represent F4WM memberships interest

Launched 3 new MT Billboards this month (Libby, Helena, Hamilton) Lincoln County is a brand new chapter and is excited to see F4WM on the ground helping locals help local wildlife – we need LOCAL SUPPORT



Spotlight on MFH Volunteer

Extraordinaire

**Scott
Smith !!**

If
you go to
almost any
MFH event, you will



most likely see Scott Smith. I caught up with Scott to find out what drives him to do so much volunteer work for the Montana Fur Harvesters.

Scott is a long-time trapper from a family of trappers. He got his first trapping license in 1969 and his dad worked for the American Trap Company making traps. These traps are still around today, but known by a different name- Victor Traps, which you can see in almost every store. Scott vividly remembers the excitement of trapping a predator for the first time. In the mountains of Pennsylvania, he spent most of his time outdoors. The day he checked his foothold trap and caught a Grey Fox was a very proud moment. He wanted to show the animal respect and hung the tanned hide on display for many years.

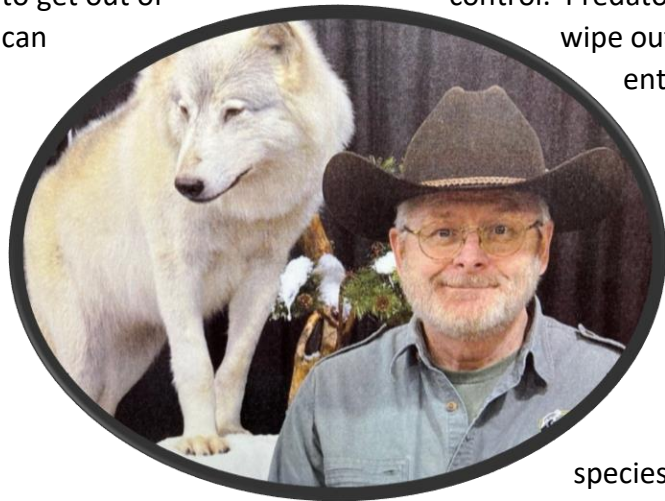
In 1979 he went to school for Taxidermy because of his love for animals and started a full-time business in 1980. There are ups and downs to being your own boss, but Scott wouldn't trade it for anything. September through December the focus is skinning animals, and he has missed many Thanksgiving dinners while skinning 35-50 bears at a time. In 1985 he mounted the World Record for a Black Bear. It was 634 pounds- about the size of a grizzly! Throughout the years, Scott has honed his skills as a hunter, trapper, and taxidermist. He is proficient with a bow and has gotten 35 deer! He has also traveled to Africa and shot impala, waterbuck, wart hog, hart beast, blesbok, and blue wildebeest. Though humble about the many awards he has won, he is considered a Master Taxidermist, and his work definitely shows his skill.

One of his most satisfying trapping experiences was spending 3 years tracking an elusive white wolf. He finally got it with a raised dirt hole No-BS trap set and used glandular as a lure. The trap was set 14 miles from where he saw the wolf for the first time. He proudly displays the wolf as full mount. It takes time

and dedication to make your trapping dreams come true.

For advice on how to become a better trapper, Scott says to hang around with people who have experience in that area and ask questions. If you can learn from someone else who has been there, then you don't need to repeat their mistakes. To be on the safe side, Scott recommends that if you have any doubt about what you are doing- don't do it! Err on the side of caution. You don't want to endanger yourself or harm a non-target species.

When he got started with Montana Fur Harvesters about 12 years ago, he made friends with Ken Cordoza and started coming to the meetings and fur clinics. He appreciates MFH because it is rare to find an organization that is solely focused on education. MFH wants to help people learn how to trap, handle furs, conservation and best management practices. Scott believes we need to educate people to help give trapping a better name. He wants people to know that trappers are not bloodthirsty! They actually care about managing a habitat and not allowing predation to get out of control. Predators can wipe out entire



species or eliminate habitat which is bad for all animals. Fur bearing animals are often predators and are a renewable resource with beauty, usefulness and value.

Scott is also a State Trapping Instructor and is committed to giving back and inspiring people to enjoy what he has had to enjoy his entire life. The Montana Fur Harvesters want to thank Scott for his many years of volunteer service! Scott is looking forward to this trapping season and being outside in the wild! By MFH member, **Kim Davie**



I, Tom Fieber, as president of the Fur Harvesters, see that our organization would be hard pressed to find a more dedicated member. Not only is Scott a member of our Fur Harvesters but is a lifetime member of many other National sportsmen groups and donates many hours and items to all for fund raising. Scott has accompanied me many times to Helena to testify on behalf of trapping and other sportsmen issues. His advice is taken seriously, his experience with other organizations has given him a broad knowledge of how things work. Scott is humble but always willing to share his methods and advice. At our fur handling clinics, he is our go to guy on prepping pelts for the taxidermy market. Over the years Scott has been on the board, he and Tressa Schutter were two of the original board members of the MFH.

Tom Fieber 

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Hello from Idaho, Greetings from Idaho,

Rusty Kramer

Idaho Trappers Association President

I am writing this president report anxious about my neck surgery in the morning. This ruptured disc in my neck has sure put a crink (no pun intended) into my wolf trapping. Sep 10th came and went and all I could do was see pictures of wolves in traps and here of trappers in my honey holes. Oh well, hopefully surgery goes well and I'll be trapping again.

Putting the finishing touches on a couple raffles we will be having soon. The first is a tanned wolverine that I bought at the Alaska fur sale this spring. We are incorporating this into a membership drive. Details to

come out soon. The second raffle is an Ed Hutzel wolf trap complete with 10 feet of chain and a 4 prong drag. The pan is engraved "Idaho Wolf" and it is a complete work of art. This trap is almost exactly the size of a Newhouse 114 and raffle tickets for this trap will be out by the time you read this. Both of these items will be drawn at the NTA National Convention in Sioux Falls, SD next summer.

Fur sales are quickly approaching, and the dates are Jan 19-21 and March 8-10. Prices will be very similar to last year, but I am already getting requests from buyers for certain items. As always, skunk, squirrel, otter, marten, fisher, grey fox, red fox, wolves, and heavy badgers are needed. Beaver market has softened slightly but defiantly still demand. Coyote market is tough but heavy coyotes are always in demand, definitely wait until mid-November before skinning them. The Bobcat market looks to softened

some on the upper end, but the bottom and mid-grade cats have come up in prices. All of the about species you can add \$2-\$15 for feet properly left on. Skulls are wanted for all species! Defiantly a premium on skulls that are less common: otter, fisher, weasel, marten, badger, bobcat, wolves, etc. Taxidermy quality wolves, cougar and bears are wanted. Skin them out entirely and roll them up and freeze them. Wolf, lion and bobcat carcasses have value. They need to be frozen before they get green. Your Idaho Trappers Association is dedicated to having the most buyers at our sales as possible to get the most value for your fur. We desperately need your support for these fur sales to continue to fight the anti-trapping battle. We do accept mailed in fur, but I urge you to call me first before shipping.

Getting ready to finalize the new furbearer season setting changes. As always, we are working to get better seasons for you, and we are here to listen to your concerns. Some items we are looking into are otter regional quotas, otter personal quotes, beaver season and beaver closures. This legislative session we will be looking at relaxing the reciprocity trapping rules in Idaho.

We were recently awarded a education grant from IDFG so soon we will be rolling out some advance trapper education classes and getting some trapping classes incorporated into the 4H program. Angel is spearheading this so stay tuned for more on this.

This is a short report, but I would like to do one final plea with everyone reading this that with the cost of everything going up and the lawyer bills from the grizzly lawsuit we can use all the support we can muster right now. Sign a friend up for a membership, sign yourself up for a sustaining membership, buy a raffle ticket or bring some fur to our fur sale. We need everyone's support to keep doing the fight we do to protect trapping in Idaho. Get out in the field and trap this fall!

Check out our Calander of Events Schedule!

- Jan 19 - 21 Fur Sale Elmore County Fairgrounds, Glenns Ferry

- March 8 - 10 Fur Sale Elmore County Fairgrounds, Glenns Ferry
- April 6th NTF (formally FBU) Banquet Filer County Fairgrounds Filer

Thank you

Rusty Kramer

Idaho Trappers Association President

208-870-3217

MONTANA FUR HARVESTERS



2023 Raffle Rifle WINNER!

Kim Davie, board member, presenting raffle rifle to Brady Yerkes, our lucky winner for this year's raffle. Brady is an EMT and volunteer fire fighter for S. Kalispell district. He is going to school for criminal justice. He plans to hunt Coyotes this fall with his new AR15. Congratulations to our winner!

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. This raffle is a major part of our fund raising each year. At our board meeting after the Fall Gun Show we drew the winning ticket. It was decided that next year we would buy two rifles, an AR-15 and a high-end scoped hunting rifle and let the winner choose the one he wants.

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 3482, 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.

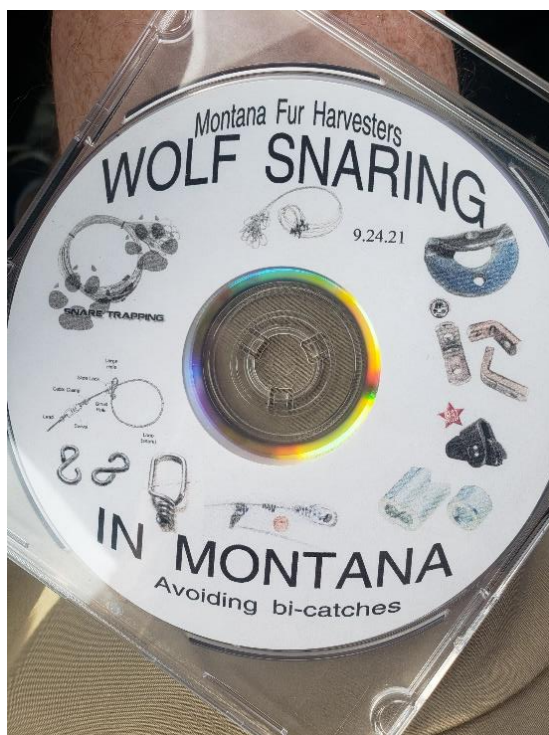
☐ Sustaining Membership \$20.00 annual dues ☐ Junior (under 18) \$10.00 annual dues ☐ Family Membership

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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 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. **Tom Fieber** 🐾

Thanks to The Meuli's of Columbia Falls.

They are always willing to share their facility for our events. Shawn and Amber are great sportsmen!

Charter Members

Donating \$100 or more!

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.

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

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

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.

Josh Jurek, Josh raised \$400 at the Palooza that he donated back to MFH. Josh is a dedicated trapper and a great artist. Josh is now MTA District 1 Director.

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.

Idaho Trappers Association, This Association is a real asset to the entire US Trapper Community. Thanks to Rusty Kramer for all he does.

Ed Schweitzer, Ed attended our booth at the Kalispell Gun Show and signed up as a charter member. This is deeply appreciated.

Scott H Smith, Director from Whitefish has been supporting the Fur Harvesters in many ways, manning booths as well.

Kenneth Cordoza, our past President still goes out of his way to support his organization.

Rusty Kramer, Idaho Trappers Association President has been a strong supporter here in Montana.

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 biologist 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.

Biologist, **Tyler Parks** in Region Two is also very good to work with. Tyler runs the region 2 spring trapper meetings and is a member of the trapping education committee.

Dillon Tabish from Region 1 is always doing what he can to get things organized and get out press releases.

Nathan Kluge is our new Furbearer biologist for FWP in Helena. Nathan has been active at the Trapper Education Class and has been really good to work with and knowledgeable as a trapper.

Ben Chappelow, game warden from the Flathead, has been filling in for Jon Obst in that capacity. Ben has been assisting with the Trapper Ed Classes and doing a great Job.

These are just a few of the many local personnel that I work with and appreciate.

Thanks to each and every one of them!

Get Ready- Get Set By Scott Smith

Well, here we are again, the start of another season. I hope that everyone has had a pleasant summer. I do not know about you, but the seasons fly by faster each year.

I am sure by now you have all your traps and shed well organized. RIGHT! Well like most years, I planned on getting everything completed early. Then, as some of you can attest to, life happens. One project after another and time slips away.

Better late than never, traps are checked and repaired, dyed, and waxed. All my tools are looked over to see what needs fixed or replaced. I paint all my tool bright red, this way it helps me find them in the dirt or snow. Well, most of the time! Red does not show up too well when I stick one in my pocket, Hoo me?? YUP.

I was able to get a few batches of waxed sand mix put up. I keep my finished product in a sealed galvanized trash can and five-gallon buckets. As far as the trash can, I dyed a few batches of traps in it to give it a good seal coat of dye. I do not know about you but, I swear the 5's are getting heavier each season. Must be gravity.

One would think that after 60 plus years of hard work and lifting that you would become stronger. HMMM! I do know that I am in much better physical and mental shape after trapping season. Last year my season started in late October and we already had snow and frozen ground. Yes, I trap in the mountains.

Along with getting the gear ready, some trappers do pre baiting. This is a proven method and works. Please, be careful when doing so. There are several reasons to be careful. One reason is the long claws. We have had several grizzly bear mauling and a few people killed again this year.

The recovery of the grizzly bear is a real success for conservation. I know of at least two sows that have three cubs with them. The grizzly bear has expanded and travels across much of Montana. Grizzly bears require a large area of habitat. With the large influx of people moving here and land being developed, we are losing habitat and the areas that they cross through. This is a full recovery of the bear, and they need to be delisted and management handed back to the states.

Along with pre baiting remember that we can spread CWD by dumping carcasses for bait piles. We can also spread the Avian Flu from birds we harvested. So please use caution.

As trappers, we help to manage the predators and wildlife we love. So please remember to take someone new to trapping along with you this season. Be patient and most of all teach them respect for all of nature. We are being watched very closely by those who want us trappers stopped.

Remember to join, attend, and support as many trapping events as possible. We have strength in numbers and need everyone on board. Try to take time and help by volunteering when you can. It is very rewarding. When the stuff hits the wall, we know we did everything we could to fight the good fight. Do not rely on others to carry the full load.

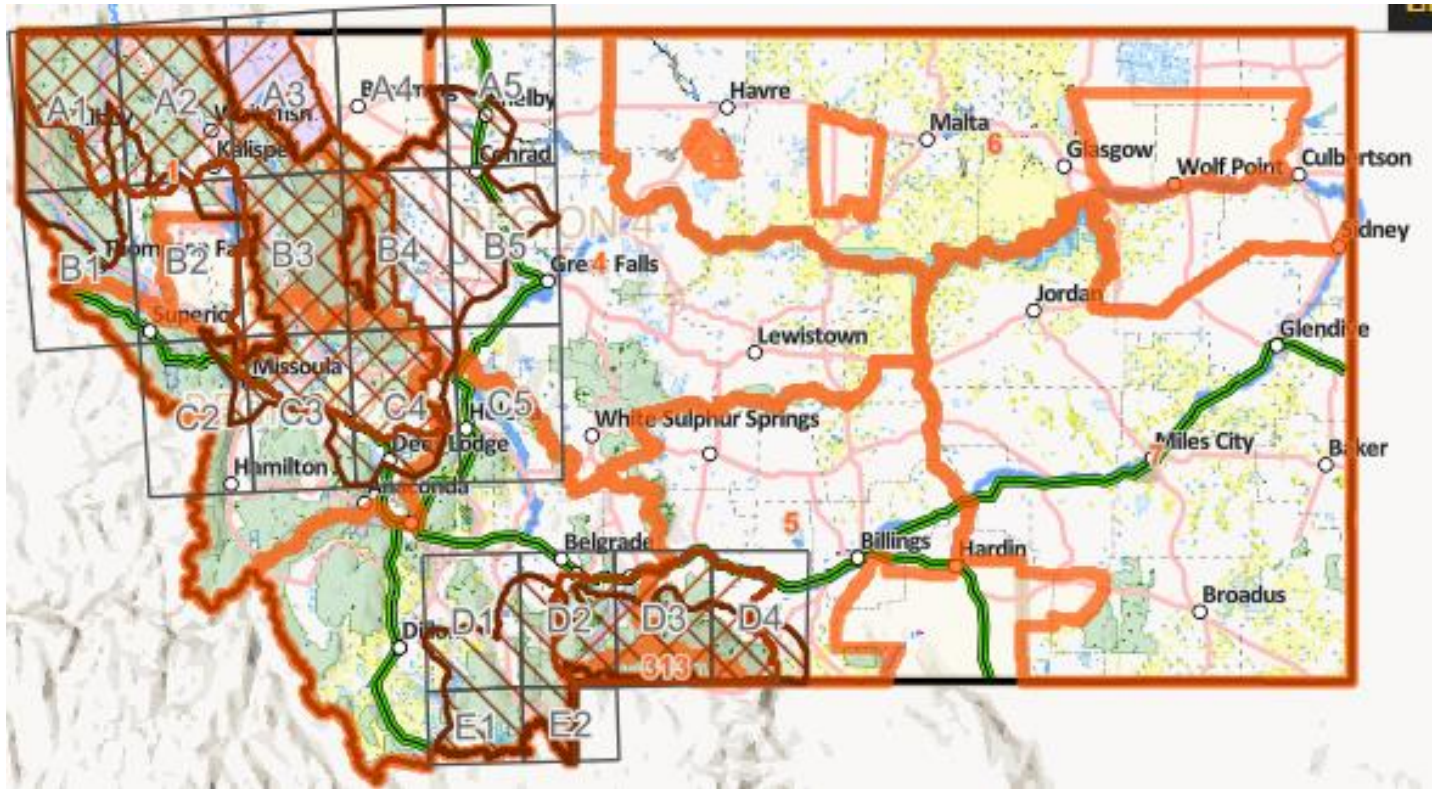
May you be blessed and grinning at the end of every day a field.

Tail Dragger, Scott



Starting dates for wolf trapping. Make sure you double check on the new regulations for floating start dates. Some of the boundaries have changed since last year, you may be able to start wolf trapping sooner this year. This is the map that FWP has on their website. It is hard to define much here but if you copy and paste the link below it will take you to it online, then you can zoom in and get more detail.

<https://fwp.mt.gov/gis/maps/huntPlanner/?species=wolf&showOwn=true&showRef=true&showWolfTrapRestrict=true>



Wolf Trapping Restricted Areas

Lynx Protection Zones



Floating Trapping Start Date Area



Map Index for Wolf Floating Trapping Start Date Areas



Wolf

Regions and Management Units



Supporting Map Layers

Public Land Ownership

-  BLM
-  National Park Service
-  Other Federal Lands
-  US Fish and Wildlife Service
-  US Forest Service
-  MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks
-  State Trust Lands
-  Other State Lands
-  Local Government

Indian Reservation



Montana Fur Harvesters
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Summer badger and ground squirrels



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