

Montana Trapping Advisory Committee Public Comments for Fourth Meeting

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EMAIL COMMENTS

Hi John,

I would like to make the following comments regarding trapping regulations for consideration by the Trapping Advisory Committee. For reference, I spent ten years as a full-time sheep rancher and used traps, snares and firearms to control predators, primarily coyotes. I also trapped beaver to keep my irrigation ditches running.

1. The current setback requirement from roads and trails is 50 feet. I believe that is inadequate. While I do not advocate letting poorly controlled pets run anywhere over the landscape (poorly controlled pets should always be leashed), well-trained animals will easily range further than 50 feet. Furthermore, trapping usually deliberately uses scent baits to attract prey, often canine prey. It is crazy and irresponsible to place such attractants that close to pathways where one can expect, and where we encourage, people to recreate. I would recommend a setback of at least 500 feet.
2. I believe the trapping of otters should be prohibited. They are a rather sparsely distributed animal, and trapping considerably lowers the probability that others will have the opportunity to enjoy them.
3. I do not know what current trap checking requirements are. In any case, all trappers should be required to check all traps every 24 hours. To not do so is inhumane and irresponsible.
4. I have mixed feelings about signage. On one hand, signage informs non-trappers of potential hazards. On the other, signage may invite vandalism or theft. I would hope that the vandalism and theft problem is small, but given the volatility of the general trapping issue that may be a naive hope. A larger setback of 500 feet as requested above would go a long way towards reducing the need for signage. With a setback of 50 feet, signage is virtually a requirement if others (hunters, hikers, skiers, general recreationists) with pets are in the area and one wishes to lessen the likelihood of pets / working animals getting caught in traps.
5. I think it would be a good idea if there were a trapper education requirement and course similar to hunter safety.

Thank you,

Gary Aitken
Ovando

Dear Trapping Advisory Committee,

As a proud Montana resident with homes in both Lolo and Bozeman, I have long been appalled--and embarrassed--by the fact that this state continues to allow trapping on public lands. My grandfather, Floyd "Doc" Carroll, who was inducted into the Cowboy Hall of Fame's Hall of Great Westerners, was the Wyoming state veterinarian. I remember as a child his telling me how cruel trapping was; how one day the West would become civilized enough to recognize that and put a stop to it.

That was five decades ago.

I am writing in hopes that this year you will takes steps that, at the very least, stand to minimize needless, inhumane suffering:

- Implement mandatory trap checks every 24 hours, and provide repercussions (suspension or loss of license) for trappers who don't abide by the trap check rule.
- Additionally, at the very least, all trappers should be required to attend mandatory classes before being licensed.
- Setbacks for traps should be significantly higher. Aside from pets routinely falling victim to hidden traps, it's just a matter of time before a child or adult is injured. Imagine the public relations debacle you will have to deal with then. As an attorney, I can also imagine the lawsuits that would follow.

You are charged with an important task--*critically* important to living, sentient beings, both two- and four-legged. If the justification for allowing trapping, which brings so little economically to this state (and indeed, probably costs more in terms of FWP's administrative work than it brings in) is ensuring this Montana "heritage" survives, please do so with the rest of our welfare and strongly held values in mind.

Respectfully yours,
April Christofferson
Bozeman

Good Morning Sir, my name is Lewis Tafelmeyer and I live in Helena Montana. I am sending you this email to voice my comments and concerns as I cannot make the January Trapping Commission Meeting in Great Falls. I am a supporter of the Montana Trappers Association and I believe they have tried their best to work within the current system to promote the interests of trappers across the state. Due to the current constitution of some of the committee members, and unfortunately some of the leadership in fwp I feel that the MTA has been lied to and it's members not treated with respect! Two elections ago the citizens of this great state voted in a overwhelming majority to support trapping. Now just a scant year later fwp is trying push a liberal out of state agenda on Montana citizens. Trappers do not need more regulations that are difficult or impossible to enforce. A small, albeit loud voice of anti-trapper agenda coming from funds that generate mainly out of state have misled fwp to believe that the general public finds issue with the current trapping regulations. I believe this to be untrue, the majority of the general public in Montana that I engage with have no problem with trapping and are curious and interested when I tell them about it.

Please support the MTA and vote for no new regulations enforced on trappers.

Thank you for your time.
Lewis Tafelmeyer

As conservationists who value our native wildlife and who have a dog we take when hiking or x-c skiing on our precious public lands, we ask for your attention to some very important areas of concern we have with trapping in MT today.

We have a close friend whose dog was caught in a trap close to a county road that was un-signed. Her partner was in such shock she had to go to the ER. The dog was in excruciating pain but is now OK. This situation should never happen but happens much more frequently now as more people use our public lands. Traps are indiscriminate and can catch any untargeted animal, wild or domestic, and cause extreme pain and suffering.

Many trapped animals play important roles in our shared ecosystems, yet they are killed for no reason. This is appalling and wrong. Trapping an individual animal for cause or research is fine but most trapping should be relegated back to the 19th century where it belongs. Trapping is not hunting; there is no fair-chase. There is little regulation. We are confident that an overwhelming majority of Montanans would agree with the following regulation of trapping:

There must be trap-free zones heavily used by outdoor recreationists.

There must be mandatory signing if traps are in the area for those of us with dogs.

There must be mandatory setbacks of traps from roads and trails, at least 500 feet.

There must be a mandatory 24 hour trap check; causing animals pain and suffering is barbaric and inhumane.

There must be mandatory reporting of ALL animals trapped. The public should be able to see what non-targeted animals are trapped.

There must be mandatory trapper education that focuses on minimizing pain and suffering.

All trappers must be required to get licenses, like hunters do.

While we would like to see trapping gone, Montana could take rational and justified steps to bring trapping into the 21st century.

Thank you for listening to the public that uses our public lands, not just to trappers.

Sincerely,

Gail and John Richardson
Bozeman, MT 59715

John this is Red Schoening

I live in western Mt.

I am not in favor of 24 hr. Trap check

I am in favor of the trap check that is currently in place and see no reason to change that at this time.

Because of lack trap check citations given out, we have a wanton waste regulation in places to address this area.

2 because this would cause a safety hazard to all because of the winter weather systems that comes through montana.

3 the trap standards that we now use are holding devices.

4 last but very much a concern is the ranchers of Montana and people of Montana would be burdened by the cost of not controlling animals. That commonly cause problems, and the excess driving to check traps on landowners lands would be excessively be placing extra traffic by placing livestock in undo stress because of the traffic of a strange vehicle on those lands.

Sincerely hope this email is read and passed out all in the meetings.

Kenneth Schoening

Good morning, Mr. Vore.

Please forward our email to the TAC.

Attached is what we requested Rep. Smith consider implementing in her mandatory trapper education bill. Much of it originated from what the FWP Commissioners had already approved and is inclusive of some of the what the TAC has been discussing is important to them for mandatory trapper education.

We look forward to working with all interested parties to help this bill pass!

Thank you,

KC
Trap Free Montana Public Lands

MONTANA MANDATORY TRAPPER EDUCATION BILL

Provisions:

- **Applies to all trappers;**
- **Incurs a reasonable cost for participants;**
- **Involves class attendance and field time;**
- **Requires testing and passing with 85% accuracy;**
- **Instructors must pass a background investigation, complete and satisfactorily pass the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks trapper education course, apprentice teach with a certified instructor for at least two full Montana trapper education courses and be recommended for certification by that instructor;**
- **To maintain certification, an instructor must teach or assist in at least one Montana Trapper Education class during any consecutive two-year time period;**
- **Minimum age for participants is 12 years old;**
- **Course instruction shall follow the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Trapper Education Manual;**
- **The Montana Trapper Education course is a prerequisite for Montana wolf trapping certification, which also incurs a reasonable cost, requires testing and passing with 85% accuracy;**
- **Instruction shall also include ethics, best management practices, regulations, equipment familiarity, avoiding non-targets, benefits of the species and their role in the ecosystem, and non-lethal methods to prevent or eliminate conflict;**
- **Trapper must show proof of completion of the Montana FWP trapper education program to purchase a trapping license. This certification must be in possession of named person setting traps, harvesting a trapped animal, presenting skulls to FWP, presenting pelts for tagging and for selling pelts;**
- **Curriculum, teachings, and oversight of the course shall involve interested stakeholders;**

FWP wardens and relevant staff shall be required to take and pass the course.

Mr. Vore, I am a trapper in Montana and wanted to drop you an email letting you know where I stand on a 24 hour trap check. First off Montana is a vast state and many trappers I know including myself can't make a 24 hour check. I personally run a 180 mile trap line that takes me a full day. If we were to have a 24 hour check I could not afford the time or the money for fuel and time away from work and home to make this happen. Secondly I trap a lot of block management private ground during hunting season. This would be bad for hunter/trapper relationships as I would be driving in these areas spooking off deer and elk every day that will take opportunities away from hunters. I feel this would be bad for the landowner/trapper relationships also as I would be driving on these ranches daily putting additional wear and tear on roads and may not be welcome back. This will also make trapping these areas less effective as these predators will be driven out of these areas daily. As a trapper I like to stay off the beaten path away from people. A 24 hour check would force me to trap closer to home and people. I can't see any good if the 24 trap check was to take place in Montana.

Thanks you for your time
Travis Fetty

Dear Commissioners., I have taken a stance against trapping for many years and voted for the anti trapping initiative. I spend a lot of time on public land hiking and running on trails and old logging roads with my dogs. Every winter I have to deal with the trapping issue. Not knowing where these land minds are set makes using public land to recreate with my dogs risky and frankly scary. I have gone to public meetings about trapping put on by FWP to state my view and been ridiculed by trappers. I have been told to stay out of the woods, keep my dogs on a leash and get out of Montana. Since when should our public lands be held hostage by a small special interest group.

Last week I was running up East Ashby Creek in Potomac when I came across a trapped coyote. His whining and crying has haunted me every since. What animal deserves this fate, especially when there is no mandatory time between trap checks. I think it is time to outlaw this so called tradition, and at the very least require trappers to post signs letting other public land users know that there are traps in the area. Please work to bring Montana up to the 21 century on this issue. Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely

Christine A. Benton

Mr. Vore

I am told you are the person accepting input concerning changes in the Montana trapping regulations, specifically the trap check requirements. I'd like to give my thoughts on this.

I have been involved for over 40 years helping Montana ranchers and herders deal with coyote depredation issues. I am a shootist. I have shot on spreads from the Segway area across to Zurich, down thru Wolf Point and the Rathert ranches. West and south to the Breaks and down thru Circle to the Terry area. The old McKay ranch lands and over to Stein, Wang, and old Sensella outfits near Baker. From the Chalk Butte country out of Ekalaka down to Alzada and west to the Powder River Butte country. 100's of hard working outfits.

These outfits needed my help shooting coyote control and I did my best. Coyotes are hard on these folks, especially in the calving and lambing season. These working ranches can't always afford calving or lambing barns and coyotes are deadly on exposed newborns. The coyotes also kill the cows and ewes laying defenseless giving birth. Once the partially born offspring are ripped up the coyotes continue tearing into the milk udder killing the adult as well. It is an ugly, costly affair.

As hard as I worked calling and shooting coyotes the guys who made more impact were and are the trappers. Those traps are working night and day non stop and the trappers laying them are true craftsman. I've met some terrific ones. Today's modern traps are well designed and do a great job of holding coyotes.

Hold is the key word. No serious trapper, and I have met many out there, ever wants to see torn skin or at worst a broken bone. They strive for solid deep foot catches and are well aware other incidental catches may happen and those animals must be released unharmed, and they are. All things considered an animal held longer in a trap is no worse for wear.

In conclusion having a 24 hour check limitation in Montana given the vastness of the state and terrain will do nothing more than hobble serious trappers, and greatly diminish their ability to help livestock owners out in the areas it counts most. Trappers must be allowed to keep moving forward and cover ground to be effective. I STRONGLY encourage all involved in this debate to forgo a 24 hour trap check requirement.

Sincerely
Jeff "Oskey" Cichoski
Currently of MN

Mr. Vore,

I am not in favor of a 24 hr trap check. In Montana we have adverse terrain and alot of country. When running traps the trapper knows his country and the predators he is after. He has a pretty good idea when he will connect on his catches when trapping predators with leghold traps.

When trapping for Marten and Beavers we are using kill sets . We know the weather patterns and when we need to retrieve these deceased animals.

If a 24hr trap check was forced on us it would prevent alot of us from trapping in general.

The trapper knows best and if he is a responsible and properly Educated with trapping skills and ethics he knows when he needs to check his traps.

Thanks
John R Wilson
Missoula Mt

Mr. Vore my name is Todd Green. I have lived in Montana all my life (57 years) and am an avid outdoorsman. I have hunted, fished and trapped all over Montana.

I am totally AGAINST a 24 hour Trap Check

1. Is not practical and the cost in fuel will make it prohibitive
2. I have talked with the ranchers and they don't want us to be coming every day
3. Once we check a trap and disturb the area again it is usually a day or two before things are settled down and human scent dissipates so any animals usually don't come around anyway. With less chance for success it would not be worth even trapping
4. I believe that all trappers are very conscious of, and respect the animals they pursue, that they will check their sets in a responsible and timely manner as I do.
5. Also the modern traps used these days are not as hard on the animal and they can be turned loose if desired.
6. We help a lot of ranchers with predator control at no cost to them or the Fish and Game.
7. To try and police and enforce that kind of (no common sense) regulation would also cost someone a lot of wasted money and resources.

Please use common sense not emotion in your thought process on this matter.

Thank you.

Todd Green

Hi Mr. Vore,

My name is Erik Makus and I recently had a run in with a trap while hiking with my dog and learned a few things about Montana's trapping rules and regulations (of which I knew nothing). One thing I was rather shocked at is that the minimum setback from a road or trail is 50'. That is too close. A setback that is not much longer than a retractable leash basically guarantees a negative encounter with a dog, kid, etc sooner or later.

As a lifelong hunter and fisherman, I respect all the great outdoor opportunities Montana has to offer and understand that people enjoy it in different ways. And I firmly believe that the best way to protect a controversial sport is to minimize negative encounters with the public. The more negative encounters the public has, the more likely public opinion is to sway against it. In that light, a goal of the trapping industry management should be to minimize encounters with the public. In a great state like Montana with 40,000+ square miles of public land, this is not hard to do. I ask that FWP requires the minimum trapping setback from any public road or trail to be 500' or more. This seems like a win-win to me - trappers have to walk an extra 90 seconds to set their traps, and a (likely) significant reduction in encounters with the public.

Thanks and let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Erik Makus

My name is Eian Thomas and I am a trapper in Montana. I believe that the 24 hour trap check is infeasible. Most trappers also have a full time job and work in the available time we have. We as responsible trappers know that we cannot leave an animal in a trap for longer than necessary. 24 hours though is simply not enough time to cover the ground necessary to run a trapline. At the same time when i trap on private land i cannot be driving in the ranchers field every single day creating unnecessary damage to the roads. Another example would be back country marten trapping, it is very difficult to access the back country every day and when it is below freezing with the kill type traps the animal is perfectly preserved waiting to be collected. The trapper knows that if it warms up at all he/she must go out and collect to prevent waist of the animal. Please know that the 24 hour trap check is not right for Montana. Thank you for your time.

Hello. My name is Heath Sybert and I have trapped since I was old enough to follow my father around. Trapping was the only way the we as a family were able to make it financially. My dad and I put in many miles and many hours running the trap line. It taught me many great things that people who have not had the opportunity to grow up as I did just would not understand. I am not a Montana resident, I live in Wyoming, but I would still like to ask you to throw out the 24 hour trap check idea. If you have any questions or there are things you would like to learn from a trapper please just ask. This bill would make it impossible for trappers to ttrap the amount of land they do today.

Heath Sybert

In regard to the possibility of a 24 hour trap check requirement placed on trappers of Montana, I have to ask what and who this would benefit, and how. And who and what it might penalize or hurt, and how. Trapping and the well established methodology of the pursuit has been a legal and effective tool for the state in keeping with it's wildlife management objectives, as well as providing supplemental income and a loved winter activity and lifestyle for the trappers in this state.

To place any time check requirement, much less a 24 hour time check requirement, on this activity places an unjustified burden on both trapper and law enforcement, for a purpose that does not benefit the animal or the trapper or the state.

It seems to me no one stands to benefit more from the timely checking of traps than the trapper himself. He or she should therefore remain the judge of the optimum time frame for doing so, determined by the particulars of their sets and line.

It also seems to me that a requisite 24 hr check would be detrimental to the success of most if not all trap lines, where it is often a waiting game, and frequent human presence could diminish the chances of successful trapping. That would be counter to the goals of state wildlife management and punitive to trappers who are already paying fees to the state as well as the expenses of equipment and fuel, etc for the opportunities to trap.

Might I suggest that the FWP spend some effort to correct misunderstandings the public may have concerning the humane attributes of this activity. The bottom line is that animals are going to die. They will all die sooner or later, and if by natural causes, it won't be pretty or humane. Animal death by hunting and trapping is, in truth, the most humane death an animal could want. The fact that folks are willing to pay the state, and associated businesses money to do both those things is a win win win. I think that in considering a 24 hr check you do well to alleviate ill will from a non-trapping public. However to actually enact such a requirement is unjustifiably punitive to a group that is performing a service to the state.

Respectfully,
Sarah Zimmerman
Winnett, MT

A 24 hr trap check would not work in mt especially sence it is already suggested anyways and I believe many trappers do anyways.please do not change Colton Pederson

I am a Montana resident and a licensed trapper. I am against this bill. Please rethink this as this would put a serious damper on predator control efforts in the state. Sincerely
Josh Jurek

Good evening....my name is Justin Wiseman. I just wanted to say that I am a trapper. I promote ethical trapping and snaring in Montana. What I DON'T promote is the mandatory 24 hr check.

I'm a trapper here in Marion Montana. This is my living in the winter. With the range the coyotes are on a 24 hour trap check would cripple my business. My gas money would double. I may only catch 3 coyotes a week. I'm checking my traps every 48 hours. I trap for cattle ranches protecting the herd. I charge nothing for this service and my pay is solely on the fur I catch. Please stop this ridiculous bill that will cripple my business!

Yours truly Paul Antczak
865-850-7037
157 skookum lake rd
Marion MT 59925

Jesus is my Lord

I'm pro trapping. I'm against a 24 hour check law. Montana and Forrest service need a leash law.
Tim Viano

Montana is a trapping state! No trap check law! Not feasible, keep trap check at current status. Thank You, David Campbell

My name is Brad Heine and I am definitely against a 24 hour trap check. A 48 hour trap check is already hard, and expensive enough. I run about a 40 mile line which ends up being about 60 miles when it's all said and done, I'm filling up my truck about twice a week now while trapping. Checking traps every day would put many trappers out of business and that's not what we want in Montana...

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to voice my concern as to why a regulated 24 hour trap check would not be good for Montana.

First and foremost, many regions of this state simply do not have a significant amount of furbearers in them at any given time. Animals in this state have significantly larger home ranges than animals of other states. There are times that an animal may take weeks to make a full circuit of its home range. A 24 hour check in most areas will result in multiple wasted checks before the animal has a chance to visit the site. Secondly, many trappers, both Hobby and Professional would be very limited to the amounts of area that they could cover if a 24 hour check were mandated. This could lead to exponentially increasing levels of furbearers in many instances. When taking into consideration animals like a coyote, this could be very economically detrimental to the livelihood of Montana ranchers.

I, myself trap and my observations dictate my trap check times in various areas that I have traps set. I trap on multiple ranches each fall, mainly to ensure predator numbers are kept in check. In areas of abundant furbearers, I will check my traps every 24 hours. In areas that see a few animals a week, I'll check 2 times a week, based on records of animal movement in that particular area. I use in the field knowledge to dictate my trap checks, not ballot box biology.

Please know that a 24 hour trap check would lead to a significant decrease in the managing of many species in this state. Trapping continues to be one of the most effective forms of wildlife management, and we should listen to the folks that have actual, hands-on knowledge of this activity, not individuals who base their knowledge on emotions.

If this rule were to go into effect, I would have to make the choice of which ranches I would have to no longer trap. Trappers who use fur sales to supplement their income would no longer be able to do so. Government trappers would end up wasting several thousands of taxpayer dollars every year. All of these in every way are detrimental to an already weak economy here.

I appreciate your consideration,

Chris Morgan
Clancy, MT

Hello,

My name is Austin Ross. I have been trapping in the state of Montana since I was 8 years old. It is a long tradition in my family dating back many generations. It has come to my attention that a 24 hour trap check has been brought before you and comments are wanted by the public on the issue. Below are some of the reasons I and many others like me feel a 24 hour trap check is unnecessary, not useful, and ultimately will do more harm than good.

Many areas trapped are not high traffic areas. Montana is full of public land and come winter time when trapping is in full swing lots of trappers take that advantage to get on snowmobiles and go as far away from anyone as possible. I know many who just like myself have started up snowmobiles just as daylight was starting to check a Marten line and not return till the dark hours of night. If you are not aware the main trap used for Marten is a connibear style trap. It kills very quickly if not instantaneously. In the harsh weather of the winter the animals killed in these traps are frozen solid in a matter of hours stopping any waste from occurring. I know personally I could run the line I do for them so far away from anyone if I had to ride back in the mountains every day. Thus if the 24 hour check would become law I would have to use a closer location to civilization at which another problem would begin. I would run into higher chances of having my traps stolen by people who do not believe in my right to trap as they do to walk their dogs and cross country ski and the same land and it would increase the odds of catching people's animals.

Now that we've covered Marten trapping and how the 24 hour catch would harm it let's look into k-9s such as coyotes and foxes. Many areas trapped like I stated before, are not high traffic areas. Take for example spots in eastern Montana or south west around the Dillon area for example. Not many people are driving around state, blm, and the forest service land that we all know is very abundant in those parts. Coyotes know this as well. If trappers were to start driving the roads every day to go check their traps it would ultimately change the pattern that these animals run. I have seen it before. Most hunters shoot at a coyote and they know that when people are around to run. The repercussions of that much traffic would stop an animal from being in the area and knowing something is up ultimately not working any sets in the area. That would result in less coyotes being trapped, more fawns killed in the spring, the spread of diseases (mange being the biggest example) and also stopping the long lines that people can have.

If the 24 hour check would come to law it would not only drastically hurt trapping in the state of Montana but to a great degree stop it in general. Lines that people run would become to small, many people would quit altogether, the damage control and other people who use trapping as a means of income would loose more money than they can make from all the fuel cost in driving every day to check traps that do not needed to be checked (whether that be from animal patterns in our harsh weather and not returning to the area for days or a freshly made set where human order is still present and animal will not work the set).

I hope Montana FWP can take my words into consideration and look at the science behind trapping and the good it does bring to the state and understand what I have listed above as to reasons why this law should not be a thought in anyone's mind who understands trapping and wants to see it continue. Trapping laws need to be based on the science behind it and not the feelings of those who do not understand and know nothing about it, it's practices, and how it is done in today's world.

Thank you for your time.
-Austin Ross

Dear sir,

Thank you for taking the time to read this email. I see on the docket for this legislative session that we have a proposal for changes to our trap check laws. As a trapper in the huge state of Montana I strongly discourage this for numerous reasons.

First and foremost as a resident of Montana you are well aware of the role that Mother Nature plays in all outdoor Montana activities. Any sort of stringent trap check law will have serious ramifications not only to trappers but to others that travel the roads with us. Some days the risk out weighs the rewards and is not worth risking life and limb to put us or others in danger.

Secondly during many times throughout the trapping year, us as trappers, are exposed to the elements and come down sick. This is uncontrollable and not avoidable by anything we do. Again to be out in the weather while being sick is going to put more people at risk of serious injury or death.

Third, I would caution more stringent trap checks as some forms of trapping involve leathal forms of capturing animals. There is no reason to risk life and limb every day for an animal that has already expired.

Fourth, Montana is a huge state and my trapline is 51 miles one way to check. This paired with working a 40 hr per week job would make it impossible for me to trap where I am. This would not only limit my outdoor recreation in our great state but would also cost the farmers and ranchers I trap for. They depend on me for predator control and the safety of their livestock. This reason alone is why I do what I do. It allows a common Montana sportsman to build a relationship with a local landowner through a passion that benefits both parties.

In conclusion I strongly disagree with limiting trappers to a more stringent trap check.

Sincerely

Michael J Birkoski

SSG (R) U.S. Army

Concerned Montana outdoorsman.

Mr. Vore,

I am writing you to encourage you to not support a mandatory trap check time in the state of Montana. Trapping is a great wildlife management tool for biologists such as yourself and Montana is geographically a very large state. The effectiveness of trapping comes in the form of being able to set and maintain many traps. Restricting trappers to a mandatory trap check time severely limits the effectiveness of trapping as a management tool and will allow populations to reach undesirable levels very quickly. I encourage you to not support such a limitation on trappers and thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Dan Turvey, Jr.

I am writing to you on the issue of trapping in Montana. I am a physician in Missoula and I spend a lot of my non work time in the wilderness with my horses and dogs. I am opposed to all trapping; I hope that Montana will soon outlaw it altogether.

In the meantime, I plead with you to enact a few simple regulations to diminish the cruelty and the danger of trapping. Require trappers to check their traps every 24 hours; to post signs warning of traps; to get a license. Create and enforce a 500 foot set back from trails and recreational areas so domestic dogs are not maimed or killed by traps.

If money is part of the problem in regulating trapping, why not require those of us who hike on state land with dogs or horses or who bring bicycles on state land to buy a permit annually. Even \$10 a year from every dog hiker would immensely increase the coffers of fwp and would even out the contributions and therefore possibly the voice of recreationalists.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jamison Starbuck

To John Vore:

First I'd like to show my appreciation for taking comments on trapping.
Second I would like you to change the ratio on the committee so it is even with trappers and non-trappers.
Third, the minimum distance of trap setbacks from roads and trails should be at least 500 feet. The current setback of 50' is dangerous for those of us who walk our dogs.
Fourth, all animals caught in traps should be reported.
Fifth, so animals don't suffer for days a mandatory 24-hour trap check should be in place.
Sixth, all trappers should be required to get licenses.
Seventh, there should be mandatory trapper education for all trappers.
Eighth, signs should be placed to inform the public that traps are in the area.

Please keep me informed of your decisions.

Thank you.

Suzanna McDougal

Hamilton, MT

My name is Vincent Roth and I trap and I am completely against a 24hr check. If an animal is dead in a conibear, snare, or drowning set there is no prolonged suffering and thus no need for a 24hr check. For footholds... Montana is huge and it takes many hours or even a few days to check ones sets especially for a longliner. Also, it is completely counterproductive to leave sets unchecked for more than a week as predators, scavengers, and other opportunists will damage the furs and the trapper is just wasting time and money. All trappers I know already self regulate and check their traps usually every 48 but a few longliners check every 3,4 days due to driving roads or sleds over 100mi per day. Please do not allow this great state to become plagued with overregulation leading to a self destructive situation like some other states have done. Montana is the epitome of what America can be and should remain uninfluenced by the loud banterings of an emotional few. Please do not allow a 24hr check to be mandated. -Thank you

trapping stop it is cruel and not necessary Marianne Ewing

Good morning

I'm writing to ask you to support mandatory 24hr/daily trap checks and support HB 787, also mandatory reporting of all trapped animals, closure of trapping on rare species such as swift fox and fisher, trapping limits and protections for beaver, mandatory trapper education for all trappers with all stakeholders equally providing oversight and supporting LC/HB 538 for Mandatory Trapper Education.

Thank you

Marina Sagardua

Boston, MA

I detest all trapping of animals and would like to see it banned completely. I doubt that will happen so I urge you to support mandatory 24hr/daily trap checks and support HB 787, mandatory reporting of all trapped animals, closure of trapping on rare species such as swift fox and fisher, trapping limits and protections for beaver, mandatory trapper education for all trappers with all stakeholders equally providing oversight and supporting LC/HB 538 for Mandatory Trapper Education.

Thank you,

Mary Shabbott

Subject Line: : Public Comment for TAC

Dear Sirs:

Even though I do not reside in Montana, I wish to join those not only in your state but from all across the country to demand that HB787 for MANDATORY DAILY TRAP CHECKS be passed in the state legislature and passed into law. I deplore and abhor the cruelty of lethal trapping. Such trapping is not

only barbarically cruel but inflicts unbearable suffering before death occurs on innocent animals that are not the intended trap's target such as dogs and other pets.

If I have a pet I do not want to reside in a state where that pet could be so easily and unnecessarily killed nor if even visiting your state could not trust that it would not be killed by these insidious devices so you would lose my tourist and property owner taxes.

Don't think this issue is not only a concern for many Montana residents it is also a concern for many pet owning and wildlife lovers all across America as well as you see I live in Virginia.

So for your economic well being and reputation for humane treatment of your wildlife it would behoove you to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Firth
Mechanicsville, VA

I would like to submit a public comment regarding trapping in Montana, and specifically, to voice my support for HB 787, requiring mandatory 24 hour checks of set traps, also that people who set traps MUST report all the animals caught in the traps, and definitely closing the ability to set traps in the areas where rare species live. The amount of suffering incurred by wild and domestic animals that are caught in traps is unimaginable. Like having your hand caught in a car door and then left for days or longer, is the suffering incurred by animals caught in traps that are not checked regularly. It is unacceptable. HB 787 would be a step in the right direction.

Also unacceptable is allowing people to set traps in areas where rare species of animals, such as the little swift fox, live. This needs to stop.

I am an advocate for protecting Montana's most valuable and indigenous assets - our wildlife. They are not ours (humans) to destroy or exploit. Thank you.

Lisa Robertson
Missoula, MT 59808

Sir, a 24 hour trap check isn't possible for a lot of trappers. We trap on horseback and to do that every single day would be ridiculous. The current recommended 48 hour check is working fine, please leave it that way. Thanks for your time, Jim Darr. Gardiner.

The thought of anyone, person or animal suffering, breaks my heart. If there is something we can do to end suffering, then we ought to, in good conscious, do it! If trapping animals in Montana has to continue, then the least that could be done is to mandate 24 hr/daily trapping checks by those who are trapping. It is so unfair and cruel to leave an injured and scared animal in a trap for days to suffer. I urge you to please support a mandate to check traps daily as well as HB787, requiring all trapped animals to be reported.

Respectfully,

Angela Schwab

Hello. My name is Candice Stewart, I live in Noxon MT. I stand with TFMPL on their stance that traps should have mandatory checks every single day they sit, set, in the forest.

There is a responsibility connected to the act of trapping that should be automatically used by trappers, but unfortunately there are innocent pets, wildlife and humans getting snared, maimed, killed ect...

To the people in charge out there, trappers will do what they want unless there is a law to stop them. I must be a mandatory, daily, check. This is the direction to head for a solution.

Thank you for your time.
Candice Stewart, Noxon, MT

Greetings!

On November 28, I was hiking with my dogs at the John G Mine trailhead in the Scratch Gravel Hills near Helena, where I used to walk daily. At the end of our walk, only one dog came when called. After 15 minutes, I began to panic. A friend helped me search for Maria in the dark until midnight but we did not find Maria.

In the morning, I found Maria less than a mile from the trailhead. She was caught in a leg hold trap. FWP determined that the trap was illegally set on the trail with no ID tag. There was a snare trap set 10 feet away. But trapping, I learned, is legal in this area heavily used by hikers and their dogs. Maria had broken 4 teeth trying to escape, and needed stitches in her leg. An emergency trip to the vet and subsequent visits have cost over \$2,000 in vet bills. Mandatory trapper education is essential for all trappers. The trapper who caught Maria obviously didn't know the regulations. In addition, all trappers should be required to get licenses, not just furbearer trappers.

I spoke with a woman who stepped on a trap set in the road between the John G Mine and Norris trailheads. She wasn't harmed, but what if that had been a child? If I had known that trapping was taking place in this popular recreational area, I would have never gone there. We deserve signs warning the public wherever trapping is legal.

Before this incident, I knew very little about trapping. I now know far more than I want to. Traps can be set on public lands. There is no time limit for a trapper to check traps. Not only do they trap intended species, traps are responsible for the deaths of pets and endangered species, as well as harming children and adults. Unlike fair chase hunting, where only targeted, legal game is being pursued by a hunter right there, any creature can be caught and struggle for days, weeks. For the public's sake, regulations mandating that trappers check their traps every 24 hours are needed.

Every town in Montana needs at least a few areas where trapping is not allowed, where people can walk their dogs and take their children without the fear of traps. Currently, trappers are holding public lands hostage, preventing many recreationalists from using popular areas.

I spent many hours in panic about my dog. Maria spent the freezing night trapped, in shock and injured. I now have substantial vet bills to worry about. I won't be taking my dogs there again. I'm too afraid of the consequences. What should have been a pleasant outing with my pets turned in to a costly, emotionally draining experience that has changed the way I live.

Sincerely,
Jane Madison Kesel
Helena, MT 59602

Hi John,

I just learned about the Montana Trapping Advisory Committee yesterday at a workshop for learning how to open traps. We were given your contact info so we could send comments via you to the meeting Jan 31.

I think it should be mandatory for all trappers to take trapper education.

mandatory that all traps be set at least 500 feet from roads and trails
mandatory to report all animals that are trapped.
mandatory that traps be checked at least every 24 hours
mandatory that all trappers be required to get a license
mandatory that warning signs show where trapping is active.
mandatory that traps be visible.

and especially, that it is mandatory that animals are only trapped for good reason, not for money, not for recreation.

thanks for taking these comments to the meeting.
Paulette Hall

Hi John,
I just learned about the Montana Trapping Advisory Committee yesterday at a workshop for learning how to open traps. We were given your contact info so we could send comments via you to the meeting [Jan 31](#).

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and especially, that it is mandatory that animals are only trapped for good reason, not for money, not for recreation.

thanks for taking these comments to the meeting.
Michael Smith

Dear M. Vore,

I am a private Montana citizen who enjoys outdoor recreation and values Montana's wildlife. For the record, I'd like to submit the following comment to the Montana Trapping Advisory Committee:

Thank you, Committee members, for working to improve trapping experiences and outcomes in Montana. To that end, I ask you to recommend the following common-sense requirements;

1. Trapper education to ensure that all trappers understand and obey the rules that keep their practice safe and humane.
2. 500-ft setbacks of traps from roads and trails to prevent unintended trapping of pets and children.
3. Reporting of all animals trapped to create an accurate database that can inform ongoing management. Reporting of trapped pets to their owners, either directly or via humane societies.

4. 24-hour trap check to prevent prolonged suffering.
5. Licensing of all trappers.
6. Signing of all traps to facilitate the relocation of illegally set traps and the release of unintentionally trapped animals.

Thank you for considering these suggestions. I look forward to the outcomes of your work.

Best regards,
Eloise Kendy
Helena, MT

Please demand that all traps must be checked daily. I can't imagine anyone wanting to use this type of cruelty to capture, kill or seriously harm an animal. Also, we all know the intended is not necessarily trapped, killed. Traps, snares are not a respectful way to treat a living creature. I can't imagine the pain and suffering inflicted on a living creature or why this is allowed. But as long as it is sadly allowed, daily checks should be mandatory without question.

Yolanda Pena

To: Members of the Trapping Advisory Committee
Re: Recommendations for your February Meeting
From: Peg Brownlee, Florence, MT

Members:

As a Montana resident and concerned citizen, I wish to express my recommendations to your committee for consideration:

- Please support HB787 and mandatory 24 hour trap checks. With 36 states already requiring this, and three that do not (Montana being one), it is important for us to move forward in more reasonable and humane ways.
- Please support mandatory reporting of ALL trapped animals, including “unintended species”.
- Please support closure of trapping for rare species such as swift fox and fisher.
- Please support trapping limits and protections for nature’s engineers, beavers.
- Please support mandatory trapper education, with ALL stakeholders equally providing oversight.

Thanks for your consideration

To John Vore or to who it may concern:

I am e-mailing in regards to the proposed mandatory 24 hour trap check.

I am OPPOSED to the proposal for several reasons:

- 1) Waste of nonrenewable resources of gasoline and diesel of which the environmentalists are against the burning of, as they say this leads to global warming.
- 2) Waste of time, Time is money and trappers are lucky to break even monetarily
- 3) Wear and tear on vehicles, maintenance is bad enough as it is, expensive

4) Harvest numbers would be down, the more often and the increase in human or vehicular traffic results in the pushing of animals(not only the target species, but all animals will be displaced out of their home territories. I believe this increase in traffic is why the animal rights people are for this so as to reduce harvest numbers, but forgetting about the non- target species.

5) Faux fur is made from petroleum sources and it is not bio-degradable in landfills. Two reasons animal rights and enviromentalists should totally be for natural fur as it is 100 per cent bio-degradable and renewable.

Sincerely,
Bob Hodgskiss
50 12th lane SW
Fairfield, Mt

Good afternoon John,

I wanted to voice my opinion about the proposed 48 hour trap check regulation you are receiving comments for. As a hunter and lifetime resident of Montana have never taken up trapping as a hobby, but do see the benefit that trappers provide to our big-game wildlife populations. I am concerned that the 48 hour trap check rule will all but eliminate most trappers that work jobs and don't have the time or resources to comply. I would strongly encourage Montana FWP to keep things as is and NOT institute the 48 hour trap check regulation.

Thank you for your time.

Alan McCollim
Bozeman, MT

Hello. I am writing to you about the 24 hour trap check that is trying to be changed from the 48 hour check. There is no possible way to get to our traps checked every 24 hours. We work on and have our own cattle ranches...during calving season which starts January 15. There are times when we can not get away from the barn in a 24 hour period; but the 48 hour does work.

Thank you,
Lawrence M. Richardson
Kathy L. Richardson
Justin M. Richardson

This email represents the 3 of us as individuals.

Hey John, understand that FWP is meeting end of this month to consider trapping regulation changes. I am a trapper in Kalispell and wanted to pass on my concerns/comments.

Not sure if it is true or not, but heard a rumor that FWP may consider moving the trap check requirement to 24 hours. I disagree with this as it makes it almost impossible for a part-time trapper who runs a Marten line in the high mountains to abide by the rules. 48 hour check is restrictive enough, especially when you are using conibears. There will be no part-time trappers, including kids, involved anymore.

My second comments involve the bobcat regulations. I tried to snare bobcats this season, but the hound hunters hammered the bobcat and filled the quota before I even had a chance to start. The current

regulations gives a big advantage to the hound hunters and trappers get the short end of the stick. Why don't we have two seasons with two quotas? This makes sense to trappers and gives us a chance. The problem of hounds getting into wolf traps is another topic all together. Split seasons would solve this too.

Thank you for your consideration, Chris West

We are totally opposed to the mandatory 24 hour trap check. We have been trapping on four ranches in central Montana for eight years. We live in Great Falls and our snares and traps are 60 - 90 miles from us. We trap because on the love of wildlife, the unique scenes we see and to assist the ranchers who give us permission to hunt. We check our sets every three days.

As a retired Montana Game warden, I am totally aware of what it takes to run a successful, legal and ethical trap line. We would not be able to financially afford to run our trap line if we had to check our sets every day.

Each 200 mile trip cost us \$30- \$45 in fuel costs. We average two coyotes per trip. With the current prices on coyote pelts we make about \$50 for our all day efforts. We have lost one animal in the eight years we have trapped in a leg hold trap and snared in the following year. The animal was in great physical shape.

Predators do not come into sets if there is human scent. Having to check a set, you leave scent. Does not make good sense to check every day.

We snare 30 to 50 coyotes each year. Coyotes are extremely good, large game, sheep and calve predators. Our catch enhances the big game numbers on the ranches we trap and decreases predation on the deer, elk and cattle and the harassment to the animals on the ranches we trap on.

Has anyone ever shown the Commission videos of coyotes hunting and taking down deer, sheep and calves. Having seen this and the consequences of coyote depredation first hand, the commission should see this.

We could not even make our trapping work in our situation with even a 48 hour check.

Sincerely
Terry and Ben Hill
Great Falls, Montana

Good morning, I wish to comment on the proposed mandatory 24 hour trap check. When trapping coyotes, the less human activity around the traps, the better. If you were to check the trap every single day it would drive the productivity of the trap sets down considerably. Any fresh human scent or tracks really sets the coyotes on edge and they will avoid the sets. As for snares, a 24 hour trap check would not be more humane as they kill the targeted animal in moments. For trapping bobcat the 24 hour trap check again does not make very much sense due to the way bobcats travel through areas. They generally pass through the same area every 14 to 30 days on a loop, therefore it makes more sense to check bobcat traps every third day or so just to make sure the set is in working condition still. If this 24 hour check is passed it would greatly hamper the productivity of all Montana trappers. Most trappers have traplines of up to 100 miles, often times even longer, and to be forced to run that huge distance every 24 hours would greatly inhibit their ability to successfully harvest the animals. Trapping has a long and rich history in

Montana. Many families in Montana rely on trapping to supplement their income in the fall and winter months. No good will come from a 24 hour trap check, be it for the animals or the trapper.

Sincerely, Ben Zimmerman

Dear John, I am writing you in regards to trapping. For me, trapping without indicating to the public that there is a trap set in a certain place is a crime against anyone that is walking nearby with an animal. More dogs are caught in traps unnecessarily. It would be nice if trappers took an educational course in trapping and checked their traps every 24 hrs. and that trappers get licenses. Most important is that trappers let the public know where their traps are set. This action would be a courtesy to all of us who want to take a walk in the woods.

Thank you, Ann Fuller. Livingston

Dear Mr. Vore and TAC Committee members,

As a resident of Montana, I am appalled at such actions to implement a 24 hr trap check. The fine residents of this state 62.7% or 312,455 people total voted against Initiative 177. Why is it the FWP and special Interest groups such as "Trap Free Montana Public Lands", "Footloose Montana", have teamed up together to infringe upon others sport and livelihood.

Apparently, Montana has gone to the dogs. Why is it these people who go onto public lands are not required to obey a leash law? Why are they not being fined for their dogs running ahead and harassing wildlife from birds to deer? Why are they not being fined for their dogs being caught in legally set traps by residents who have paid for their license through FWP? And last but not least why is the Trapper has to make concessions to cater to irresponsible pet owners?

The current recommended 48 hr check works. The majority of trappers are self-regulating and responsible, unlike the pet owners who ignore leash laws.

I have been a trapper for 42 years and I can honestly say that I have never seen any broken bones, chewed off legs or any other injuries to where the animal could not be released if a non-target catch.

Where is the data that FWP has compiled of trappers that have been fined for wasting wildlife or cruelty? How many coyotes have been seen running loose with a trap on its paw compared to public observations of deer and elk with arrows sticking out of them?

The key to this is education for the trappers and for pet owners to own up and be responsible guardians. We all need to work together on these issues and not punish one group or another for their actions. Everyone knows predators are drawn to suburbia due to the easy meals. Coyotes have an acquired taste for dogs and house cats. We are here to help with that problem not to be punished.

Sean Davis
Forsyth, MT

Dear Sir.

I urge you to stop the pursuit of further restriction on trapping in Montana. Including, but not limited to a trap check law.

It's disappointing to see the FWP paying so much lip service to such a vocal minority with so much out of state interest. I guess the squeaky wheel does in fact get the grease, even if it's entire platform is based on heart string propaganda and outright lies.

The voters of Montana spoke when they defeated initiative 177. Public sentiment in Montana supports trapping as they recognize the benefits of trapping from a wildlife management, and livestock protection standpoint. Do not listen to out of state interests rooted in concrete and skyscrapers, nor the transplanted, highly vocal minority. They are the MINORITY.

Montana does not need more regulation.

Thank You
Daniel Liane

Mr. Vore,

I am unable to attend the upcoming meeting for public comment regarding the Montana Trapping Commission. Please allow this to serve as my comment and share it with the committee.

There is no need, whatsoever, to address current laws, rules, or regulations in reference to trapping within the State of Montana. Montana trappers are currently following legal and ethical trapping regulations which need no further restrictions. In recent years, the Montana trapping community has been assailed with multiple attempts to demonize, curtail, and eliminate trapping. Trapping has been and continues to be a legitimate biologically needed function to maintain a healthy balance of predator/prey for the Montana landscape. I am opposed to any and all attempts to further curtail or limit current trapping regulations and this includes the effort to establish a 24 - Hour check rule.

Please, oppose and refute any attempts to the contrary.

Kindest regards,

Nathan Albertson
Eureka, MT

Im a trapper from northeast Montana.. Our trap check laws are fine. Please... do not change them. Its impossible to run a 300 mile line every 24 hours. Its insane to even entertain the idea. I believe our fish and game department is doing a good job with managing our fur bearers... don't let these ignorant people who know absolutely nothing about trapping dictate what is common sense. Thanks for your time.
Roman Rang

Mr.Vore:

I lost a beautiful Great Pyrenees dog years ago when both he and a younger Pyrenees pup were caught in traps 100 ft. below my house on Rock Creek (Tom Miner area). My older male was caught in a neck snare and the younger in a leg trap. Pyrenees are not roamers - but the trap was baited with pungent smelling beaver meat and they went for it. Our property bordered FS land. We heard the dogs and my husband went looking for them. He was met by a man saying he was going to get tools to get the dogs loose. We knew the "trapper" and he knew our dogs and knew we lived there. We had our beautiful guardian dogs to protect our property from Grizzlies and wolves. By the time my husband and the trapper got the dogs loose it was obvious that my older dog was not the same. He died 11 days later from a

condition that trappers sarcastically call “jelly head.” This was a horrific way to lose a precious guardian animal and beloved friend.

I was so traumatized and paralyzed over the incident I did not know what to do.

The trapper did not report it to the authorities and told us he was after wolverine. I did call and report it after the fact and he was fined. My dog was gone.

The rules for trapping are far too lax. The pain and suffering to the animals is indiscriminate. A dog or a person can be caught in a conibear trap anywhere in a stream.

Trapping was once part of the Montana heritage but it is no longer necessary. There should be legal trapping under certain circumstances but trapping for money or trophies is archaic.

Montanans should be able to vote on this issue. End this unnecessary tool of suffering, and strictly enforce the existing rules.

Thanks for hearing my story,

Ren Evanoff

Please excuse the brevity and any typos - Sent from my iPhone

Dear Mr. Volesky,

I am a business man, a family man, and a trapper in Montana. My business revolves around the procurement and marketing of wild furs locally and at the international level and also of removing nuisance animals as requested by paying clients. I am considered a subject matter expert by my peers and business associates in my field of expertise. And, I trap fur bearers for my own income and, yes, enjoyment.

I am very concerned by the direction that the Montana FWP is trending in regard to regulations related to fur bearer management, specifically the Department's and John Vore's apparent desire to capitulate to animal rights groups.

Various animal rights groups and specifically the Natural Resource Defense Council (based out of New York City!) is making a push in Montana to have a mandatory trap check period implemented. For a number of reasons, I oppose those efforts.

Firstly, because of Montana's wild weather swings during the trapping season it is many times not possible to check traps within a mandated time frame.

Next, if running a long line for canines or bobcats, the distances sometimes encountered don't make it possible or reasonable to be able to check traps within a given time frame, especially if the weather and drifting snows close roads.

And, a mandatory trap check period is not reasonably enforceable by FWP wardens, (their words).

A mandatory trap check regulation would essentially make my activities illegal if I couldn't comply with a given time frame due to weather, distances, vehicle breakdowns, etc.

And, more important than anything, the current 48 hour trap check recommendation works. The “want” of some of the animal rights groups to add another layer of control in order to phase out all trapping activities is merely a solution in search of a problem.

You need to know that John Vore is being railroaded by the NRDC on this issue of mandatory trap checks and other perceived “problems” of the animal rights groups.

Respectfully,
Brian Stoner,
Montana Wildlife Control Services L.L.C.
Belgrade, MT

Dear Mr. Vore,

I am writing in regard to the upcoming Trapping Advisory Committee meeting, and regulations I would like to see implemented regarding trapping.

My husband and I have been Montana residents for 35 years, and have always had a dog that we take out into the national forests, state and BLM lands year-round. The exception is during trapping season, when we stay off the national forest lands because of fear of traps. We personally know 3 people in this area whose dogs have been caught in traps, and the trauma was horrendous for both owners and dogs. We would like to see the following stricter rules on trapping:

- Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet.
- Require signage at trail heads where traps are set or can be legally set. On some of the State lands near Bozeman, this is done, and it doesn't seem to be a problem for the trapper. We see a sign that there's traps and we don't hike there.
- Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e. illness). A trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for a year. Second offense, loses license for life.
- Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock.
- Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated.
- Designate several trap-free areas in every Montana county. Two years ago, a friend and I got 1,000 signatures of Gallatin County residents who wanted trap-free trails. Unfortunately, we didn't get any, but got some with 500 ft. setbacks.
- Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) substantially to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource.
- Trappers must compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma. The fact that if a dog gets caught in a trap that the dog owner cannot legally get the trap off without possibly being fined is ridiculous, and the dog owner should not have to pay to have their pet treated.
- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat. Wolverines and lynx have been accidentally killed by trappers in recent years. When there are thought to be only 300 wolverines left in the US, this cannot be allowed.
- Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.
- Mandatory education for all trappers must be in person. Instructors give a test at the end of the day to gauge whether the student has learned enough to get a license.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
Sharon and Steve Sutherland

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to ask the Trapping Advisory Board to make important changes to trapping regulations. While hiking on my own property I was barely able to keep my golden retriever and black lab away from a leg-hold trap that was baited with an attractant. If I had not been right by their sides, they would have gotten into the trap. I watched the trap for days. No one came to check it. My friend's Great Pyrenees was caught in a trap and died from his injuries. The trap was on a well-used trail on public land. I strongly urge the Board to make the following improvements to the regulations:

- Prevent trappers from using any attractants that lure animals to the traps since they entice many animals, not just those allowed to be trapped.
- Prevent trappers from setting traps within 500 feet from roads or trails.
- Mandate that all traps be clearly marked and areas signed so that people know there are traps.
- Establish a system to ensure that traps are checked within 24hours. Taking a trappers word is not adequate.
- Mandate that all trappers be licensed and regulated and that they must report all animals they catch.
- Mandate that pet owners are compensated for any harm to their animals including all vet bills if the animal is lucky enough to survive long enough to get to the vet.
- Ban trapping in threatened and endangered species habitat

Thank you for considering my recommendations for change to the regulations. Please understand that the vast majority of people who use public lands do not trap. It is a very small number of people who do. It is critical the Board protect the interest of the larger public so that people and their dogs who are legally using our public lands do not have to endure the heart-wrenching experience of finding their animal caught in a trap.

Sincerely,
Lill Erickson
Livingston, MT

Dear Mr. Vore,

This letter is to the Trapping Advisory Committee. Please pass it on and have it read into the minutes of the next meeting.

There are so many reasons why I believe trapping to be bad, I would like you to please consider doing the following, at the very least.

For individuals who do not trap:

- Increase setbacks for all traps including those in water from trails and roads to at least 500ft.
- Require signage at trailheads where traps are set
- Require signage in areas where traps are set
- Require signage within 20 feet of where traps are set
- Designate several trap free areas in each Montana county that non-trappers are likely to use
- Compensation for the victims of traps, whether a person, their belongings or their pet.
Compensation should be enough to replace or cover the cost of treatment.
- Traps owners should be identifiable from the trap itself by the use of engraving or tags or similar.

For the safety of trappers:

- Mandatory education and testing, with a pass before a license can be given.

Regulations to pay for the cost of administration and data collection:

- Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated.
- Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) substantially to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource.

For the safety of animals and the environment generally:

- Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e. illness). A trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for a year. Second offense, loses license for life
- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.
- Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.
- Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock.

Thank you.
Scharyn Way.
Victor, Montana.

TRAPPING ADVISORY COMMITTEE • FINAL MEETING

I understand the last citizen's meeting is occurring on Jan. 31st. I know many states have been reviewing information on beavers and their role in water retention which is becoming a key issue as we face drought and warmer temperatures. We need our water. I hope the committee is reviewing the regulations that have been put forth in other western states and will ban trapping to kill beavers. Trappers can do a great service to our state in live trapping problem beavers so they can be moved to a place where they can have a very positive effect on stream restoration. Thank you for your consideration. Eva Patten

Eva Patten
Bozeman, MT 59715

Dear John Vore,

We are concerned about potential impacts of recreational trapping on both: 1) Montana citizens recreating on public lands and their pets, and 2) local wildlife.

We urge you to enact the following common sense trapping regulations for public safety and responsible wildlife management.

1. Require signage at trailheads where traps are set - and in the immediate vicinity of the traps.
2. Increase setbacks for all traps from 50 feet 500 feet from all roads and trails.
3. Require a 24 hr maximum limit on trap checks.
4. Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps to provide data for wildlife managers.
5. Require licenses for all trappers, and also require mandatory education for all trappers. Include a test to gauge whether license applicants are qualified to obtain a trapping license.

In closing, we hope you share our concerns for Montana's people and wildlife, and will act responsibly to ensure adoption of these basic regulations to enhance public safety and wildlife management.

Thank you,
Cheryl and Rob Fimbel
Bozeman, MT

To the Trapping Advisory Committee:

We are writing to the Committee as a resident of Montana's Bitterroot Valley, who are avid and frequent back country users and the owners of three dogs. We feel strongly that trapping should be more highly regulated for at least three reasons.

To reduce the suffering of lawfully trapped animals

To reduce the inadvertent trapping of non-target species, including domestic dogs

To glean as much information as possible from trapping, to facilitate appropriate management decisions

As a step toward reducing the suffering of lawfully trapped animals, there should be a requirement that all traps be checked on a frequent basis, ideally every 24 hours.

To reduce the inadvertent trapping of non-target species, setbacks from roads and trails should be increased significantly. Since we back country ski with our dogs, we feel obliged to carry vise grips with us during wolf trapping season, to be able to release a potentially trapped dog. Since coyote trapping and snaring are legal at all times, we even worry about entrapment when other seasons are closed.

To glean information from legal trapping, mandatory reporting of trapped animals should be required for all species. This will allow more accurate population estimates, as well as quantifying the number of animals killed by this method. These data will help FWP make appropriate adjustments to current hunting and trapping regulations.

Thank you for considering our concerns.

Sincerely,
Kathryn Tilly and Joe Rimensberger
Hamilton, Montana 59840

I am writing to say that I and my family are 100% against ALL trapping of ANY wild creatures in Montana. Period.

Elaine Kimbler, Livingston, MT

Please consider instituting a 500 foot setback from trails for all trapping, and posting notices at trailheads when there is any trapping allowed in the vicinity. Montana is changing, and we have more children and pets on our trails, and so we must change our management of public lands to protect them from accidental encounters with wildlife traps.

Margarita McLarty

I do not need to single out one "hot button" item to comment on. I abhor trapping in any form for any reason. What would be a good reason? It is a barbaric practice that needs to stop. It is inhumane and too often traps innocent domestic animals. A society is judged by its treatment of animals - need I say more?

Ann Machek

Mr. Vore,

Please consider this a comment for the Trapping Advisory Committee.

I am a Montana resident that uses public lands. I reside in Helena.

There needs to be mandatory trapper education so that people doing that activity are aware of the laws, rules, and safety procedures involved with trapping.

There needs to be mandatory setbacks of traps from road and trails of at least 500 feet. A trapper has no right to put me or anyone I am recreating with, or their pets, in danger by putting their traps close to trails. Life and limbs of people and pets are at stake. 50 feet is far too short a distance and greatly reduces the ability to enjoy using public lands without fear of sudden and serious injury through no fault of my own.

Please require mandatory reporting of animals that are trapped. How can this committee or any government body make informed decisions without knowing what is being trapped, how often, and where?

All trappers should be required to obtain a license. Licenses are required for all kinds of activities that are both dangerous and benign. Driving, boating, fishing, hunting, and other activities require licenses. Trapping has the potential to seriously harm life and limb of fellow Montanans. A license is a reasonable requirement in line with other activities.

Thank you,

Brian Fadie
Helena, MT

Please extend my input to the Trapping Advisory Committee before the January 31/ December 1 meeting. Thank you.

Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock is the ethical thing to do.

Please discuss the responsibility that trappers have by compensating pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma. Some years ago, in Frenchtown, this was not an issue for me because I did not need to be compensated for the harm that came to my dog because he was dead. When I finally found him.....in a trap that had not been checked for 6 days.....a vet was of no use. My dog had ID on him. Had the trap been checked; I could have been notified. The issue remains: traps are indiscriminate. Trauma lasts. This year, when I went to a Forest Service plot with my permit to harvest a Christmas tree with my family; I could not fully enjoy the experience for fear that my dog would be in a trap before the day was over.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

Glenda Barnes
Bozeman, MT.

I am writing as a concerned citizen of Montana regarding the current lack of adequate regulation of trapping in the state. I understand the Trapping Advisory Committee will be meeting at the end of the month and would like to encourage support for the following regulations:

- Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet.
- Require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.
- Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e. illness). A trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for a year. Second offense, loses license for life.
- Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock.
- Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated.
- Designate several trap-free areas in every Montana county.
- Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) substantially to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource.
- Trappers must compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma.
- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.
- Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.
- Mandatory education for all trappers must be in person. Instructors give a test at the end of the day to gauge whether the student has learned enough to get a license.

Trapping originated at a time when it was not common for so many people to spend time in the wilderness recreating, especially with their pet dogs. It's time for trapping regulations to responsibly address 21st century realities and needs.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for sharing this message with the rest of the committee.

Sincerely,
Phoebe Hunter

Dear Mr. Vore:

I am writing to ask you to update the trapping rules and regulations, please. I was shocked to recently learn about things such as not requiring trappers to check traps. I also naively had the idea that traps were, oh, say a mile away from where people frequent at trails and outdoor recreation areas. Fifty feet! Wow. That is terrifying to me.

I ask that the following be adopted:

1. Mandatory trapper education including passing a test demonstrating understanding and compliance with the laws as well as best practices, with fines for noncompliance.
2. Mandatory setbacks of at least half a mile from roads, trails, and any areas frequented by humans, with fines for noncompliance.
3. Mandatory reporting of any and all animals trapped, with fines for noncompliance.
4. Mandatory 24-hour trap check, with fines for noncompliance.
5. Mandatory licensure for all trappers, not just fur-bearer trappers, with fines for noncompliance.

6. Mandatory warning signs at the trailheads and within where trapping is legal and active, with fines for noncompliance. I'd absolutely prefer that all traps must be flagged, too.

7. Removal of the law that would fine a person for tampering with a trap if a dog was in it. I would hope Montana is the place where people are humane enough to try and get a trapped dog to its owner/a vet asap.

I have been a Montana resident since 1986. I was a Wyoming resident most of my life prior to that. I am an elk hunter; I am not opposed to hunting game. However, the idea that killing animals in this inhumane way is a recreation is sickening to me, even more so once I learned that very few of the animals are game or even for their pelts. Do we really want to perpetuate the need to kill small animals for fun?

The fact that these traps can injure and kill dogs so quickly is a huge concern. I think Montana's booming outdoor recreation industry much less the high quality of life our residents live here for, which includes our dogs front and center, is far better served by removing traps from areas where dogs are likely to get hurt.

I don't want to see wildlife, such as mountain lions, caught in traps either. In my perfect world, trapping would become illegal altogether. Knowing that isn't going to happen, I ask that there is more respect and protection for all of us, please.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Savannah Barnes
Livingston, MT

I support the elimination of all trapping on public lands. People should be stopped from causing pain and suffering to wildlife, pets, and hikers!

Kathleen L. Richard. Registered Montana voter. Helena, Mt.

01/25/2019

Hello,

I am writing you in opposition on LC787. While from the outside looking in, changing the mandatory trap check times from 48 to 24 hours seems practical, but it is not. Montana is very vast, and terrain makes travel slow, especially in the fall and winter months as trappers are traveling via snowmobiles and Off Highway Vehicles to check and place traps.

Changing the trap check times to 24 hours will greatly reduce the number of ethical trappers due to these unrealistic and uneconomical expectations. This therefore creates more issues with waterways being obstructed with beaver dams and with predatory animals coming closer into civilization as the numbers of these animals boom.

I do not think 48-hour trap checks are excessive. With the use of offset foothold traps that FWP is already mandating, animals could be released without injury after being in the trap after 40+ hours. I know this because I released several red foxes from footholds this year without injury within the 48-hour check time.

To put this into perspective for you, I trapped private property this season for a rancher who had a severe coyote infestation. Due to the astronomical numbers of the coyotes, a lot of the natural prey had been eliminated including deer and elk fawns. This forced the coyote to start preying upon his cattle. This rancher had lost around a dozen calves to coyotes last year. By ethically trapping coyotes on his ranch over the last 6 months, the deer have returned and there is now a more natural balance between predator and prey. I took 23 coyotes off his property, 12 of them were female. With an average litter of 6 pups per female, that comes to 72 additional coyotes to be killed. Now I urge you to look at the larger picture of what will happen across Montana if trappers can't do their part. I believe the coyote and wolf have their places on the western landscape, but these animals must be managed responsibly.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Tim Burnett
Deer Lodge, MT

I am a proud resident of Montana supporting of shared use of our lands. However, I am strongly opposed to current laws on trapping which I believe are inhumane and dangerous to humans and pets.

I ask that the following be adopted:

1. Mandatory trapper education including passing a test demonstrating understanding and compliance with the laws as well as best practices, with fines for noncompliance.
2. Mandatory setbacks of at least half a mile from roads, trails, and any areas frequented by humans, with fines for noncompliance.
3. Mandatory reporting of any and all animals trapped, with fines for noncompliance.
4. Mandatory 24-hour trap check, with fines for noncompliance.
5. Mandatory licensure for all trappers, not just fur-bearer trappers, with fines for noncompliance.
6. Mandatory warning signs at the trailheads and within where trapping is legal and active, with fines for noncompliance. I'd absolutely prefer that all traps must be flagged, too.
7. Removal of the law that would fine a person for tampering with a trap if a dog was in it. I would hope Montana is the place where people are humane enough to try and get a trapped dog to its owner/a vet asap.

--

Stacie Costello
Bozeman, Montana

Dear John,

I am writing as a long time advocate of a trapping ban. Since we failed to get a ban passed in 2016, I would like to ask that restrictions be added to Montana statutes. I propose that setbacks from trailheads be at least 500 feet, for water sets as well as land. I am strongly in favor of 24 hour trap check requirements. I recommend that trappers report all animals caught, including pets, livestock and non-target animals. I think the fee should be doubled for trapping, as climate change threatens all wildlife populations. I think beavers should be exempted from trapping on public lands, because their dams can provide important ecosystem services by slowing snowpack/water release.

Thank you.

Nancy Ostlie

Bozeman MT

Mr. Vore I understand the FWP is pushing hard for a 24hr check on all trapping. This sir will not benefit a state like MT that is dependent on agriculture. 72hr check is the only way possible to access back country remote places that have to be managed every year to help protect livestock and our resource wildlife. If it ain't broke don't fix it!

Alex Chambers

Good Afternoon Mr. Vore and Mr. Brown,

I'm emailing you both concerning the trapping regulations being brought to you as a potential bill, specially the 24 hour check. I currently trap for both fur and predatory control. If a neighboring rancher calls and has an issue during calving season, I take the to remove the problem animals. A time-restricted trap check would not only make it impossible to be efficient in removing predators, specifically coyotes, it would make it financially impossible. I mainly run dispatch snares, which ethically put down the coyote/fox in a manner that allows me to go 3 to 4 days between checks. This allows me to cover miles and miles of country, thus helping more area ranchers by keeping the predators at a reasonable level. If I was restricted to a trap check, not only would the area I could cover be cut down to nothing, but driving into an area everyday checking sets would push most animals out. Once I quit trapping, they would simply move back into the area after my daily appearance stopped.

A trap check law would result in few trappers, leading to overpopulation, which would lead to disease spread such as mange. It would also cost the state more funds on the Wildlife Service side of things. The government trappers would be responsible for ranchers having more predation on livestock. Thus having wildlife services answer to calls that used to be handled by trappers who were doing it for free.

I hope you share my concerns with any of your committee members. Thank you all for your time.

Kevin Tweten

Trapping means animals, caught at random, die in agony from hunger and thirst. Animal torture is illegal in every other context, and as civilized human beings, we must end this atrocity.

Carol Marsh
Missoula, MT

--

"The ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do." – Jack Kerouac

I'm am sending this email in support of all Montana fur trappers.

Apposing the current bill that is being proposed against them.

Thank you. Tim Ott.

Missouri.

Mr Vore,

Hello, My name is Nick Adkins and I'm contacting you regarding the proposed legislature in your state regarding the 24 hour trap check proposal. As an avid outdoorsman and trapper who frequents your great state as a non resident; I wanted to voice my strong opposition to this proposal. The dynamics and geography of your state make this proposal absolutely ridiculous in terms of any real life predator control. The country is too big and the home range of fur bearing predators is too great for one to cover that said amount of ground and have any realistic expectations of controlling an or maintaining those predators.

The mismanagement of wolves and grizzly bears is already rapidly affecting the mule deer and fawn crops in areas of the state. Eventually, that mismanagement is going to effect that macroeconomics of your state in the form of reduced numbers of hunters, both resident and non resident. Hitting closer to home, predator management is an essential tool to aid all of the stockmen and their livestock across the state of Montana. Managing coyote and cat numbers saves calf and lamb numbers.

This proposal is nothing short of an attempt by extreme leftist, liberals to take away a useful and nessecarry tool to maintain the health of the wildlife and stock in your state, to appease their emotional and unfounded feelings. This bill would not do anything to help the economy of the state of Montana, it's wildlife, it's stock, or its citizens. It's insane to even consider this measure.

I appreciate your time and thoughts regarding this issue.

From a nonresident who truly appreciates all your great state and it's people, thank you, and please do the right thing.

Sincerely,
Nick Adkins

Please require trappers to check all their traps every 24 hours, so animals trapped randomly don't have to die of thirst or hunger.

Please increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet. Please require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.

Please require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e. illness). A trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for a year. Second offense, loses license for life.

Please require all trappers to be licensed and regulated.

Please *designate* several trap-free areas in every Montana county.

Please raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) substantially to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource.

Trappers must compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma.

Please ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.

Please suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.

Mandatory education for all trappers must be in person. Instructors give a test at the end of the day to gauge whether the student has learned enough to get a license.

Carol Marsh
Missoula, MT

To whom it may concern:

- Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet.
- Require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.

- Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e. illness). A trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for a year. Second offense, loses license for life.
 - Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock.
 - Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated.
 - Designate several trap-free areas in every Montana county.
-
- Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) substantially to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource.
 - Trappers must compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma.
 - Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.
 - Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.
 - Mandatory education for all trappers must be in person. Instructors give a test at the end of the day to gauge whether the student has learned enough to get a license.

Thank You,

Ursula Neese
Bozeman, MT

Hello,

As someone who recreates often in Montana's forests, I'd like to comment on trapping.

Those who trap in 2019 do so for sport, to connect with Montanan's past, and sometimes for specific purposes, such as to relocate animals, correct?

I have two thoughts I hope the committee will consider.

For one, indiscriminate setting of traps, or even a trap line, I imagine, can catch animals not meant to be caught, such as, endangered species or family pets, which concerns me. Are there regulations the committee can set up to prevent this, or at least minimize the effect?

Second, and most importantly I think, wherever traps are set, I hope the committee establishes regulations that the traps be humane ones.

I once had a dog lose its paw tips to a trap. We were staying in a cabin in Helena National Forest next to a road and near other cabins, when he came home with a swollen foot. The vet said to soak it in epsom salts twice a day. After the swelling went down, the tips of his paw fell off. It was awful, but I'm grateful it wasn't worse, which it could have been.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Robin Kent

Dear Mr. Vore and TAC Members,

Thank you for meeting and working on issues related to the recreational and commercial trapping of Montana's wild animals.

As a Montana resident and concerned citizen, I am asking you to consider the following:

1. **Prohibit cruel killing** methods of trapped animals such as stomping, beating and strangling animals to death, injecting chemicals and poisons, and drowning!

It is unconscionable to me to even be writing this as it should be obvious that recreational trapping in and of itself is a sick and cruel hobby that causes Montana's wild animals to greatly suffer. The least trappers could and should do is to quickly shoot a trapped animal to end her/his misery.

2. **Implement a 24-hour trap check.**

With most states already requiring this, it is time for Montana to implement this reasonable requirement. Do not let trapped animals suffer more than they already do.

3. **Mandatory signage in areas where trappers set traps and snares.**

For more than 18 years, I have not been able to enjoy the Bitterroot drainages and other public lands in the winter due to fear that my dogs could get injured and killed in traps and snares. This is not fair to citizens who pay taxes in order to use and enjoy our public lands.

4. **Require trappers to report all trapped animals**, including "non-targeted" species.

The impact on wildlife populations and the ecosystems cannot be determined without comprehensive data collection on all animals injured and/or killed in traps whether "targeted" or not.

For example, "As many as 100 of the animals [fishers] were killed in Montana between 2002 and 2016. Idaho prohibits fisher trapping, but 86 were killed by trappers in the state accidentally in the same time period, according to a recent report from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service"

https://lmtribune.com/northwest/groups-want-trapping-ban-to-aid-montana-s-fishers/article_2a5d6a9b-aa82-500f-99f1-92f77bef559b.html

5. **Close trapping for rare species such as swift fox and fisher.**

These species have been reintroduced repeatedly at the public's expense. Enough!

6. **Close trapping for beavers** as these natural engineers are essential for creating fire breaks to stem climate change. We need more wetlands, greater water storage to fill aquifers, and we need beavers to do the work. Non-lethal "beaver deceivers" (waterflow devices) can be installed to prevent flooding of roads.

7. **Require trappers to compensate guardians of companion animals** for expenses incurred from vet visits or loss of companion animal.

8. **Limit allowable use of traps and snares to 20 per trapper per season.**

Surveys have shown that trappers own around 200 traps and that they have 100-mile traplines. This is unreasonable and contributes to the known problem of trappers not checking their traps. I have seen rotting animals left in traps and those were horrific sights of horrific animal cruelty.

9. **Following the model in Canada**, consider FWP assigning certain areas to trappers and make it mandatory for trappers to register their traplines so that they can easily be monitored, and over-trapping as well as trappers trapping in multiple districts can be prevented.

10. **Establish buffer zones and trap-free areas, increase set-backs from 50 feet to two miles.**

This will allow trappers the experience of trapping Montana's wild animals in the true tradition of Jim Bridger and other early pioneers, who trudged through all types of tough terrain instead of modern, urban trappers, using 4-wheel drive trucks and snowmobiles.

11. **Move predators from the Department of Livestock to the authority of FWP**, to streamline the trapping program. Require trapping licenses for trapping of predators as an increased income source for FWP.
12. **Increase the cost of trapping licenses from \$20 to at least \$50.** The current cost of merely \$20 for one license that enables a trapper to kill an unlimited number of animals is unacceptable. This would be a common-sense change in light of the facts that 1) trappers use tax-funded public lands, 2) profit from selling the pelts from publicly-owned wild animals, and 3) use equipment (Conibear, leghold traps and snares) that are not being taxed and thus their use does not benefit FWP. This is in stark contrast to hunters, who pay a considerable fee to hunt and whose guns and ammunition are being taxed.

In conclusion, social conflict surrounds the issue of recreational/commercial trapping due to its inherent and undisputable animal cruelty. The general public simply abhors the trickery and most importantly, the violence with which trappers treat wild animals. The public accepts hunting because of its claim of fair chase and food procurement, none of which applies to trapping. If no concessions are being made by the pro-trapping community, social conflict will only increase as a consequence.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Anja Heister, PhD
Missoula, MT

Dear Chairman Vore,

Please share my comments on Recreational Trapping with your committee.

My favorite recreational activity bar none is walking in the woods around Bozeman with my dog Teddy. He's a playful 97 pound part Pyrenees with a nose for carcasses that takes him far beyond 50 feet from the trail. I have studied online about traps and what to do, but I don't always carry a set of pliers or other equipment to release and care for my dog if he were to get trapped.

I tried to pick out a few items from the list below, but it turns out, I support them all.

- Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet.
- Require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.
- Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e. illness). A trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for a year. Second offense, loses license for life.
- Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock.
- Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated.
- Designate several trap-free areas in every Montana county.
- Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) substantially to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource.
- Trappers must compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma.
- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.

- Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.
- Mandatory education for all trappers must be in person. Instructors give a test at the end of the day to gauge whether the student has learned enough to get a license.

Kristen Walser
Bozeman

Dear TAC,

I'm writing in regards to the consideration of a 24 hour trap check law. Not only would this be the most restrictive trap check law in the western United States, it would be bad for Montana for a number of reasons.

It does not account for extenuating circumstances such as: A blizzard causing hazardous conditions for days, automobile break downs, illness such as the flu, or a trapper asked to work a second shift at their day job.

It's also unnecessary when using lethal sets such as dispatch snares, bodygrip traps, or drowning sets. Trappers pursuing marten with bodygrip traps need only check traps a couple times a week when temperatures remain below freezing.

There currently is trap tending technology used in biological studies and animal damage control that notifies a trapper when a trap is fired. This technology is not mainstream yet, but will be sometime in the future and will make any kind of trap check unnecessary.

There is also the economical impact this law would have. Trapping is a commercial activity and generates millions of dollars in the state of Montana. These are dollars that are generated nearly all from export and received by middle and low income households. Then in turn is used on the local level right here in Montana. With a 24 hour trap check trappers would be severely handicapped and would not be able to produce at current volumes, reducing this income stream for Montana citizens.

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks use to issue bumper stickers that read "Education not Regulation" that is precisely what trapping in Montana needs. A legitimate mandatory trapper education program would be a far better than any new regulations.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joshua M. Lodge
Montana trapper, hunter, and fisherman

We are out of state y unable to attend the meeting/hearing, but we are very concerned about this issue y would like our comments to be included.

First of all, we feel that trapping is outdated y should be eliminated. How many people actually make a living from it? There are thousand of times more people with dogs...y we worry about our grandchildren who love to explore, often off trail. That these few individuals use our public lands in a way that is potentially harmful to therestof us is unreasonable y unfair.

That would be our first preference. Perhaps one day. Until then, these would be our second choices: Limit trapping to private land...or at least designated low use public lands (they should have more game as well).

Designate y increase trap free areas....we don't get to hunt everywhere, why should trapping be any different. Trapping areas could then be better monitored.

Require ALL traps to be painted or flagged orange. Even young kids would understand this (orange is required for hunting).

Require mandatory licensing y regulating of trappers.

Require traps to be registered- like guns - so ownerships could be traced.

Require mandatory training/testing for licensing for all regardless of age.

Increase the cost of licensing to pay for above. This would eliminate casual would be trappers (for fun).

And if you are unwilling to designate “trapping areas” (different from “trap free” areas) at the very least increase setbacks from ridiculously low 50 feet from trail to 500 feet (But still require orange traps....many of us hike/hunt off trail).

Require traps to be checked every 24 hours y a log kept as to timely critters.

And lastly require signage if on public lands.

We are a fourth generation Montana family who hikes, hunts y fish on public lands. We use a trapper on our river ranch occasionally for beaver control. But we feel strongly that trapping (especially if on public land) regulation needs to be updated. We’ve done so with hunting y logging - bring trapping from the 1800s to 2019.

Please include us on any additional mailings regarding trapping. Thank you.

Ruby y Doug Kikkert

Clinton

Below are my comments to the Trapping Advisory Committee. I must let you know that hiking, skiing and other outdoor activities with my dog have been severely restricted knowing there may be traps in an area, and hearing from folks who had a kid or a dog hurt or even killed by one of these horrible contraptions. Trapping should be a thing of the past when humans did all kinds of things to put food on the table and survive. Nobody probably ever eats trapped wildlife and such cruelty for a hobby?

Thanks for including these comments in your considerations.

gonnie

- Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet.
- Require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.
- Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e. illness). A trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for a year. Second offense, loses license for life.
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- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species’ habitat.
- Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.
- Mandatory education for all trappers must be in person. Instructors give a test at the end of the day to gauge whether the student has learned enough to get a license.

Gonnie Siebel

January 28, 2019

Trapping Advisory Committee
c/o John Vore

Dear Mr. Vore,

Trapping has been a part of Montana's long history. More than one hundred years ago trapping was a necessity for some to survive in our rugged mountains: for warmth, food and for trade. In modern times, however, trapping is no longer needed. It should stay in our HISTORY.

Like many others, my family enjoys the use of Montana's public lands (fishing, hunting, boating, camping, hiking). When I learned that trapping was allowed in the same areas where my children and pets frolic and explore, I was immediately concerned. How am I to know WHERE these traps are?

Public lands should be SAFE for all. When traps are baited and camouflaged where people, children and pets recreate this violates our constitutional right of "...pursuit of happiness...". How can the public happily enjoy its land when traps are close to trails and there are no signs to help us identify that there is danger in the area?

Please consider these viewpoints during your meeting with the Trapping Advisory Committee this week.

Thank you for your time,

Rebecca A. Murray
Bozeman, MT

To Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on trapping in Montana. For the past five years I have been part of a citizen science effort to determine the numbers of wolverines and fishers in the Bitterroot and Sapphire Mountains. Despite many camera sites throughout the area, we have documented very few fishers and wolverines, certainly not enough to warrant trapping of either species.

I am also concerned about recreational trapping of beavers. These animals play a critical role in watershed areas and will be even more critical as the climate continues to warm. Please consider banning recreational trapping of beavers in our watershed areas.

I also feel it is critical that trappers be licensed and regulated, just like hunters, and need to be mandated to report any animal trapped.

Sincerely,
Julie Ellison
Missoula, MT

Dear John:

I am writing to ask the Committee to consider my suggestions to current trapping laws as I am an active hiker/snowshower in MT. I'm in the outdoors with my dog frequently and I am deeply concerned that trapping is not being regulated and managed enough in Montana. Trappers of old were on their own with

little contact with other humans, now the outdoors in Montana is a recreational mecca for thousands of people and their pets and trapping presents a threat to public safety. Here is my list:

1. Please think about changing the composition of your advisory committee to an equal number of trappers and non trappers. The current committee is loaded against the will of the public. Let the FWP chair break any tie decision.
2. I want to see FWP approved signage at trailheads and other heavily used recreational areas posted by the trapper alerting people of traps in the area. Then citizens with dogs and small children can make an informed decision whether to go elsewhere. Companies that spray pesticides have to flag areas where is a public danger. Cigarettes and alcohol are labeled and there are many more dangers that require public notice. Traps cause immediate danger, with injury or death.
3. Trap setbacks currently are ridiculous. Go to the maximum safety zone of 500-1000 feet.
4. Require all trappers to be licensed plus the fee is too low for the money they are making on unlimited pelts. If trappers want to compare themselves to hunters who actually consume their game, then they should be charged for the profit they are making when they only want the animals fur.
5. Require trappers to check their traps within 24 hours with mandatory reporting on non trapping species caught like dogs, cats, birds etc. This information should be tabulated and studied for better management of the activity.
6. Remove beavers from the trapping list. Beavers are a crucial species to combat climate change. The Committee members should read, Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter by Ben Goldfarb. This is one of the top ten science books of 2018 providing the reasons to protect beavers because of their amazing ability to restore lands and waterways.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Wolff

Stevensville MT

Hello Commission,

I am writing to encourage you to adopt a number of measures to protect the public and domestic pets and non-target wildlife from some of the worst consequences of our currently barely-regulated trapping scheme.

Trapping is conducted by a very small percentage of the public, is indiscriminate, and is dangerous to all and I would advocate for a ban on trapping on all public lands. If however, you do not ban trapping on public lands, I urge you to adopt the following regulations that will at least make the practice safer for the rest of us who enjoy public lands, make it less likely to result in terribly cruel prolonged deaths of animals- whether wildlife or domestic pets, reduce likelihood that protected species are trapped, and create a better record of what animals are actually trapped.

Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet.

- Require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.
- Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e. illness). A trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for a year. Second offense, loses license for life.
- Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock.
- Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated.
- Designate several trap-free areas in every Montana county.

- Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) substantially to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource.
- Trappers must compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma.
- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.
- Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.
- Mandatory education for all trappers must be in person. Instructors give a test at the end of the day to gauge whether the student has learned enough to get a license.

Thank you for this opportunity,
Sarah McMillan

Trapping Advisory Committee
c/o John Vore
Fish, Wildlife and Parks
4600 Giant Springs Road

January 28, 2019

Dear Trapping Advisory Committee,

I understand that FWP needs to use hunting and trapping to regulate wildlife populations. However, trapping of animals is cruel!

I don't hunt personally, but support ethical, substance, fair chase hunt for folks to fill their freezers with healthy proteins.

Fair chase, ethical hunt, when done properly, does not make the animal suffer. The same cannot be said about trapping.

To that end, please: require traps are checked twice daily (during sunup and sundown), no less than every 24-hours under special circumstances; if not checked in 48-hrs, a trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for life.

Just because we humans are at the top of the food chain, it does not mean that the animals we consume should suffer!

Thank you for your time, sincerely,

Sabina Strauss
Gardiner, MT

Dear Mr. Vore,

I am a Montanan who cares deeply about indiscriminate recreational trapping. First and foremost, I think trapping of any kind, unless it's live trapping, is grossly inhumane, barbaric, and needless! I can't believe anyone would want to submit an animal, a sentient being, to this kind of cruelty. It is utterly

mindboggling! I must say, I wonder about the souls of people who engage in this kind of behavior. Living in the wilds of Alaska is one thing, using trapping for subsistence, but Montana is not in the middle of nowhere like fly-in villages in Alaska.

In addition, I don't buy the argument trapping is a part of Montana heritage and history. Let's remember the same argument was used to legitimize slavery, which was once a part of the nation's heritage and history (and nothing to be proud of!). It's an old and outdated argument that no longer bears weight! Things change!

Injuries to pets are occurring with greater frequency, and additionally, it was reported a small child was caught in a leg snare! Indiscriminate recreational trapping causes dangers to people, pets, and wildlife! As a result it needs increased regulation and oversight (I'd like to see it eradicated myself!).

First of all, anywhere trapping occurs needs to be posted-signage at trailheads where traps can be legally set, or are set. The public has the right to know; especially given it's public land! Public safety should be paramount!

Traps need to be set back from water sets, trails and roads, from 50 feet to 500 feet, also for public safety!

It is only humane (if you can call trapping humane) that trappers be required to check their traps within a 24-hour time frame! A trapper caught not checking his traps within the allotted time limit should have his/her license suspended for one year. Second offense, loss of license for a lifetime! Absolutely no excuse!

Mandatory reporting for all animals caught in traps: targeted species, injuries and harm to non-targeted species including endangered species, domestic animals, and livestock. How else can wildlife populations be somewhat properly monitored, and population data increased without proper reporting?

Require all trappers to licensed and regulated!

Designate several trap-free areas in every Montana county. The public should have the right not to worry about traps everywhere they recreate on public land!

Trappers must be required to compensate pet victims' owners for pet bills and trauma. It's only fair! If you want to trap and you cause harm to others, there should be consequences. There is for everything else, why should trapping be exempt?

Recreational trapping in endangered species habitat needs to be banned! There is no excuse for not implementing this! Trapping is indiscriminate! No further explanation needed!

And lastly, mandatory education should be required for all trappers. It must be in person. Instructors give a test at the end of the day to gauge whether the student should be eligible for a license!

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments. I hope you seriously consider implementing them! As a Montanan, it should be my right, and every Montanan's right to recreate on public land without having to worry about traps!

Very truly yours,

Millie Carson

Dear Mr. Vore,

Please accept my comments on trapping in Montana for your committee. First, so you know, I do not like trapping and feel that it is outdated for these times, that it is cruel, and that it is contributing to the gradual extinction of many animals. So, any regulations that would help trapped animals I am for! I am for increasing setbacks from trails, I am for mandatory 24 hour checks on traps, I am for raising the price of a trapping license, I am for banning recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat, and I am for suspending trapping of beaver.

Thank you for your consideration of these ideas.

Sincerely,

Laura Wakeman
Dillon, Mt

Dear Mr. Vore,

I am writing to address several issues that are being talked about in the advisory committee. I do not support a 24 hour check for trapping. This is way too frequent. In trapping coyotes, if you do this the coyotes will not come into the area. They are very sensitive to scents and you need to give the area a few days to air out. Checking about every 3 days is much more appropriate. Also, in this state with our winter weather conditions it is sometimes impossible to get out daily. I have seen road closures during storms where I couldn't get back to my sets. Also, the cost of checking daily would be terrible. You would be making it almost impossible for us to trap. I also do not agree with a beaver quota, really??!! We have more beavers in this state than we can control. We do not need more or protect them! Do you really think ranchers are going to support this? My husband does adc work for them and I know they would not be happy with this.

Please read this to your committee. I want it to be shared.

Thank you!

Valerie and Chad Esche

Dear Mr. Vore:

Please share these comments with your committee on trapping.....thank you.

I have worked in various capacities in wildlife conservation since 2005. After listening to both sides of the argument, and after seeing the remains of chewed off limbs of animals caught in leg-hold traps, I remain convinced that trapping is a cruel 19th century practice trying to parade as a solution to a 21st century issue. I feel proponents use trapping as a convenient wildlife management tool to control populations when, in fact, it is simply a commercial for-profit enterprise....both for the trapper and as a revenue stream for the state. Just because its a long-held Montana tradition, does not justify its current use. Sacrificing virgins at the alter was also a centuries old tradition but we don't do that anymore. Supposedly, residents of the Gallatin Valley and students of MSU represent "Bobcat Pride", and yet the State of Montana last year killed over 1500 bobcats? I've never even seen one in the wild.....maybe because they are being over-trapped.

The indiscriminate killing of non-target animals is barbaric. I hike my Karelian bear dog off leash on public lands all the time. If the public and trappers are going to share access to public lands, shouldn't we be able to do so without fear of victimizing our dogs? During hunting season, there are concrete steps I can take to avoid conflict with hunters (ie. my dog can wear an orange vest, we can hike on trail, or we

can suspend our hikes for the 6 week rifle season). There is very little we can do to avoid conflict with trappers.

Here is what I'd like to see if the State insists on this medieval practice:

- Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated including agents of the state monitoring specific traps on a spot-check basis
- Raise the ridiculously low price of a license.
- Require signage in all areas where traps are set
- Increase set back distance for all traps, especially at water, trails, and roads.
- Require 24 hour trap limit check
- Trappers identification (name and lic. #) should be on every trap for accountability
- Trappers must compensate pet owners for vet bills
- Require mandatory reporting of all animals in caught in traps

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Michael Stoerger

Dear Mr. Vore,

I understand that the Trapping Advisory Committee is having its final meeting this week.

I am writing to share my opinion that I would like stricter regulations on the trapping industry. As a longtime Montana resident, I am a frequent user of hiking trails throughout the state, usually accompanied by my children and dog.

I strongly encourage the committee to consider increasing the setback for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet. The current limit of 50 feet seems far too close when curious children and pets are freely enjoying the great outdoors.

Please also consider requiring mandatory signage at trailheads to alert non-trapping users to the situation.

Lastly, I am also a big proponent of mandatory, in-person education for all trappers as a requirement for obtaining a license.

Thank you and your committee for considering my comments.

Molly Thompson

January 28, 2019

TO: *Trapping Advisory Committee*

RE: *Comments for consideration in making recommendations to the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commissioners*

Dear Members of the Trapping Advisory Committee,

Footloose Montana represents more than 186,000 Montanans. We appreciate the opportunity to suggest regulations regarding trapping. Please consider these suggestions:

1. **Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated.** Trappers cannot claim to be highly regulated if trappers of nongame wildlife and predatory animals don't have licenses or regulations. Their impact is unknown.
2. **Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps.** This increases knowledge of harm to non-target species as well as population data and injuries.
3. **Create several trap-free areas on public lands near population centers in each county** to eliminate a lot of pets getting caught, maimed and killed in traps and snares. Several are necessary due to the over-use of existing areas.
4. **Require signage at trailheads** where traps are in use or can be legally set so people avoid these areas. **Increase setbacks from trails, roads to 500 feet.**
5. **Require a 24-hour trap-check** to reduce suffering and save pets and livestock.
6. **Suspend recreational trapping of beavers.** We need water and wetlands in this era of fire and drought. Recreational beaver trapping is irresponsible.
7. **End trapping of fisher, swift fox and rare and dwindling species** when there is no scientific data to support killing them.

Thank you for reviewing these recommendations. We feel they are necessary to maintain the stability of wildlife populations and protect the safety of humans, pets and livestock. Wildlife watchers and public land recreationalists vastly outnumber trappers today, making it imperative to consider all users.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Footloose Montana
Missoula, MT

Members of the Trapping Advisory Committee,

On January 13, 2019, I found myself at MT Wild at a course learning about trapping regulations in Montana; and how to release my dog from certain traps and snares. For the record, I have never had a pet caught in a trap. However, I recently had to witness the worry and heartache of a friend whose dog was caught in an illegally set trap. Although injured, this brave dog survived what had to have been an extremely traumatizing event and subsequent medical treatments.

I am very grateful that I attended this training because I now know how to release my dog if she ever gets caught in a foot hold trap or snare. On the other-hand, if a Coni-bear trap is used I will most likely have to watch her die in front of me. Even the instructor had an extremely hard time trying to release a Coni-bear trap. Let me tell you, there was not a silent person in that training when the Coni-Bear trap was demonstrated on a large stuff toy dog. It crushes the life right out of any living creature in just minutes.

I find it ludicrous that a pet owner could be given a penalty for releasing their pet from a trap. I spoke with a lady at the training who said her dog had been caught in traps three times. Each time, Fish, Wildlife, and Parks came after her and tried unsuccessfully to give her penalties for releasing her pet (alias disturbing the traps).

Trapping is an antiquated form of killing wildlife just for their pelts. Trapping is also a very inhumane method of capturing and killing animals that in this day could be, and should be stopped. What about hunting you might be thinking? Hunting, is not the same as trapping. It is very different because hunters search for their game. It is a more fair and humane process that does not leave animals to die an agonizing death. While I abhor trophy hunting, I realize that there are Montanans who hunt to fill their freezers with food. I have nothing against that.

I ask that the Trapping Advisory Committee consider the following items:

Until trapping can be eradicated in Montana, require Trapper Education to be taken by all trappers & would be trappers of all ages. Hunter education has been in place for many years,

Require Trap-free Zones in areas, such as Mount Helena City Park, that are frequented by recreationalists and their pets,

Require signage in all areas where trapping is conducted, especially along waterways,

Increase the current set-back for traps from 50 feet from trailheads to at least 500 feet. Hopefully, at that distance, pets will not be lured to baited traps,

Require 24-hour time limit in which trappers must return to check on their traps,

Require trappers to not just release someone's trapped pet; but to also take it to a Veterinarian for medical treatment. Each minute that goes by is vital, and

Require trappers to notify pet owners that their pet has been caught in a trap.

Respectfully,
Carolyn DeMartino
Helena, MT

To: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Trapping Advisory Committee via jvore@mt.gov

From: Jonathan Matthews, Chair, Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club

I submit the following comments on behalf of nearly 3000 Sierra Club members in Montana.

The Sierra Club considers all body-gripping, restraining and killing traps and snares to be indiscriminate to age, sex and species. These devices typically result in injury, pain, suffering, and/or death of target and non-target animals and therefore Sierra Club opposes their use, particularly on public lands. The Sierra Club promotes and supports humane, practical and effective methods of mitigating human-wildlife conflicts and actively discourages the use of inhumane and indiscriminate methods.

If trapping is allowed, the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club requests implementation of the following measures:

*Mandatory trapper education, with no grandfather exceptions to training.

*Mandatory setbacks of traps from roads and trails. The minimum distance should be at least 500 feet.

*Mandatory reporting of all species trapped.

- *Limits on the taking of beaver.
 - *Mandatory 24-hour trap check.
 - *Mandatory licensure for all trappers, not just fur-bearer trappers.
 - *Mandatory signing of traps.
 - *Trap free areas throughout Montana.
-

> Attention FWP Trapping Committee,

> I am very concerned about the proliferation of trapping on public lands. My definition of public lands includes use by many users and by allowing traps on public lands it essentially becomes the use of one segment of the population. Traps put all manner of other species at risk. Including dogs, kids, adults, wildlife that are not the target of the traps, cows, horses, etc.

> I would like to submit the following comments to the FWP for consideration:

- > • Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet.
- > • Require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.
- > • Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e. illness). A trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for a year. Second offense, loses license for life.
- > • Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock.
- > • Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated.
- > • Designate trap-free areas on all public lands in Montana.
- > • Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) substantially to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource.
- > • Trappers must compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma.
- > • Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.
- > • Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.
- > • Mandatory education for all trappers must be in person. Instructors give a test at the end of the day to gauge whether the student has learned enough to get a license.

Sincerely,

Ruth Swenson
Helena, Montana

Dear members of the Trapping Advisory Committee,

My name is Meglena Wahrlich, and I live in Billings MT. I am reaching out to you today after I finding out about the Trapping Advisory Committee meeting coming up in a couple of days.

As a citizen of Montana, nature and animal lover as well as explorer, I am very troubled of this practise.

My peers and I love hiking, camping and enjoying every aspect of the outdoors every chance we get. I pretty much bring my dogs everywhere we go.

However after learning about the type of public safety issues trapping can present and how non-selective and cruel this practise is, I decide to reach out and express my concerns and I hope you would take these into consideration when reviewing the current trapping regulations.

I believe that trapping is overall a very barbaric practise. I have looked at other states and countries, and we are far behind the rest of them when it comes to legal restrictions on these cruel and nonselective practises.

I am also worried because there are cases in which people's dogs have ended up in traps located on public lands while out hunting or hiking. I feel like for safety reasons there should be at least some sort of marking to point out where these traps may be placed in the area. It's disconcerting that such measure isn't enforced.

Montana doesn't profit much from the trapping licenses. And at the same time trapping contributes to the loss of sensitive wildlife resoures. In our unique state we need healthy wildlife to sustain healthy ecosystem for our own enjoyment and in my mind it's also a huge factor in our tourism industry. I have many friends visiting outside of state and outside of the country that love coming here just to enjoy the outdoors and amazing nature and wildlife. The number of some of these rear species we have here like mountain lion, lynx, wolverine, fisher and others that are treated to decline even further if we don't reassess our trapping practises and regulations. We all know trapping is a non-selective way to target specific species.

We should have limit to the traps that a trapper can set and mandatory trap checks should be enforced to help eliminate an animal as quickly and humanely as possible. I believe that just like hunters, trappers should be responsible for quick efficient way to end an animal's life. I just can't imagine the suffering and distress an animal goes through.

I believe we should start exploring other ways of sustainable wildlife management as well. We live in a state that in recent years have been battling a growing number of wildfires. And instead of using our wildlife resourses we trap and eliminate them. Beaver ponds keep rivers and streams wet all year, compensating for less snowpack and glacial melt. We just need to stay out of their way or get them moved from an area where they create damage to an area where could actually help us.

I hope that would reassess the current trapping practises and see about improving them.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Meglana Wahrlich

As Vice President East of the Montana Trappers Association, I did a survey of various trappers and Land Owners in Eastern Montana. In every instance, I was told they wanted no trap check time. We have lows on the books already about wasting fur by not checking traps. I was told that the Montana Livestock Association stated that they were 100% behind us.

Harold Johnson

Dear MFWP Trappers Advisory Committee,

My name is Megan Carfino, and I live in Northern WY about 20 miles from the WY/MT state line. I very much enjoy exploring the recreational opportunities that southern Montana has to offer. I love hiking with

my dog, Lucca, and my domestic ferrets. Yes! I have leash trained domestic ferrets that love hiking! I know you don't hear that every day haha.

I have a deep respect for the land, no matter where I may be. I respect private property, livestock, and wildlife. I clean up after my pets, never allow them to harass other hikers, wildlife, or livestock. I follow "leave no trace" protocols.

One thing that is always of concern to me, in the back of my mind, is the presence of traps and the potential harm to my pets. I would not dream of asking MT or WY to stop what is both a long-standing tradition as well as an effective means of predator control- it comes with the territory of enjoying this beautiful country. I would however like to voice a few requests that may help to put pet owners like myself at greater ease, and/or help educate pet owners about the presence of trapping.

I think that it would be beneficial to post signage at the parking/access areas of trails & other recreational areas, that simply let patrons know if trapping is legal in that area. I believe that this could not only help prevent the non-target catching of domestic pets, but that it could also be beneficial in another way- people would be more inclined to leash and control their dogs in such areas, potentially cutting down on possible harassment of livestock/wildlife. I feel that this could be a win/win!

I would also love to see mandatory reporting of all non target catches (from both fur bearing and predator trappers) especially of domestic animals. I believe that this could help determine "problem areas" where more public education and awareness is needed. Speaking of public education, perhaps it would be of public interest to hold a seminar once or twice per year, that teaches pet owners what to do if their pet is caught in a trap. I think that pet owners typically panic, especially if they are not familiar with trap types & how to open them, and this panic could cause more damage to the pet. Knowing how to release a pet quickly and calmly would be very beneficial to dog owners recreating in trapping country.

I am sure I could go on with more... setting traps further away from trails (100' or more), requiring certification class for trappers (like hunter safety certification!), designating trap-free recreation areas, requiring trappers that are in violation of trapping regulations & catch a domestic animal (livestock or companion) to compensate the owner, etc. But I think the signage, especially, would be an excellent place to start!

Pet owners dread traps. Trappers dread the bad press of catching pets & of course reputable trappers never want to see damage to a non-target species, domestic or otherwise. I strongly believe that through better awareness & education, all around, we can reduce the "dread" on both sides.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to share my thoughts on this matter. I may not be a MT resident, but your beautiful state is only a stone's throw from my doorstep, so to speak. I cherish the time that I, and my odd crew of pets, get to spend there!

All the best,

Megan Carfino
Sheridan WY

Hello -

I understand that the MFWP Trappers Advisory Committee will be meeting soon to discuss trapping regulations.

While I would love it if trapping was prohibited completely, I would like to request some protections that will benefit people, animals, and our environment.

First, I think it's very important that there are strict time frames for how frequently traps should be checked. At very least, 24 hours. If a trapper is caught not checking traps within the time limit, they should lose their license, and if caught a second time, they should be banned for life from having a license.

I also think there should be mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps. This will increase knowledge of population data, injuries, harm to non-target animals (including animals who are endangered), domestic animals, and livestock. This data will only help make more informed decisions in the future.

Trappers are using a precious resource and also threaten the safety and well-being of other animals. There should be mandatory education for all trappers, and it should be done in person and require a test. There should be a higher trapping license fee,

Last, I think it's VERY important that all trappers should be licensed. I understand that predator trapper are not held to current trapping regulations. I think this is a mistake because it would be too easy to venture into other kinds of trapping without proper licensing.

Thank you for taking the time to read my message.

Jessica Lifford

As a resident of Helena, I have often walked my dog on BLM trails north of Helena. I recently learned of a dog being caught in a leg-hold trap set illegally, causing significant physical harm to the dog and great distress to the dogs' companion. I have attended a recent training on what to look for while out on public land with my dog and how to release an animal from a trap. It is very obvious to me that Montana laws and FWP trapping regulations need to restrict trappers from I inhumane trapping practices and increase enforcement. I support the following changes in law and rule.

- Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet.
- Require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.
- Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e. illness). A trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for a year. Second offense, loses license for life.
- Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock.
- Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated.
- Designate several trap-free areas in every Montana county.
- Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) substantially to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource.
- Trappers must compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma.
- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.
- Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.

- Mandatory education for all trappers must be in person. Instructors give a test at the end of the day to gauge whether the student has learned enough to get a license.

I urge the Advisory group, legislators, and FWP staff to take these recommendations seriously.

Kathy A. van Hook
Helena, MT

Dear Mr. Vore.

I urge you to require

1. Require all trapper to report all animals caught in traps.
2. Ban trapping in Endangered Species habitat.
3. Require trappers to compensate pet owners for injuries to their pets.
4. Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated.

As an occasional visitor to your state I was disappointed to learn the Montana doesn't seem to have any regulation of commercial and recreational trapping.

Craig Petersen Colorado

Dear Mr. Vore,

As a regular visitor to Montana, I would like to express my opinion about the current proposed trapping regulations. I respectfully urge that you take the following considerations into account.

- Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet.
- Require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.
- Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e., illness). A trapper who does not comply with these rules should lose his/her license for a year. For a second offense, the trapper should lose their license for life.
- Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps. This is helpful to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock.
- Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated. (Trappers who trap "predators" currently escape general trapping regulations)
- Designate several trap-free areas in every Montana county.
- Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource (the animals being trapped).
- Require trappers to compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma.
- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.
- Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.
- Require mandatory, in-person education for all trappers.

Thank you for your time.

Rosa and Garry Miller
Denver, CO

Dear Mr Vore,

I was really hoping to be able to attend your meeting, at least for one day, but my work schedule is not going to work out. So here are my thoughts.

It is my understanding that your committee is once again entertaining a bill to require a 24 hour trap check. We all know that sometimes this might make sense but many times it does not. I know that you have heard the pros and cons before so I am not going to drag this out by listing all of the reasons this is a bad idea. I thought that this was going to be addressed through education.

Many of the very ranches that you are trying to gain public access to depend on private trappers for at least some level of predator and beaver control. This will not only double the trips that a trapper makes over their ranch roads but also limits their effectiveness.

But I believe that the real bottom line is the fact that good ethical trappers are going to manage their trap lines in the most efficient and ethical way practical. Just like slob hunters, slob trappers are going to abuse the resource and give us all a bad name. It will not make any difference what the laws say, the ethical will do what is right and the slobs will abuse it. You can not legislate good moral values or judgement. All you will do is make life more difficult for those of us that are going to do the right thing anyway. Besides all of that you are setting your game wardens up with a new law that will be impossible to enforce.

My family has been trapping in Montana since the mountain men days. My grandpa always credited the good fur prices with the reason they held onto the farm during the depression when so many neighbors lost theirs. My grandson is the 8th generation born here, I sincerely hope that he has the opportunity to be a trapper as well.

Please share my comments with the rest of your committee.

Paul Harris
Lewistown MT

Dear Mr. Vore,

It has come to my attention that you are reviewing your trapping regulations. I have visited Montana many times and love visiting your beautiful state very much. It is truly God's country. If I may, I would like to forward a list of considerations that I would appreciate you taking into account for the benefit or our animal friends.

- Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet.
- Require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.
- Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e., illness). A trapper who does not comply with these rules should lose his/her license for a year. For a second offense, the trapper should lose their license for life.
- Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps. This is helpful to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock.
- Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated. (Trappers who trap "predators" currently escape general trapping regulations)
- Designate several trap-free areas in every Montana county.
- Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource (the animals being trapped).
- Require trappers to compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma.
- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.
- Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.
- Require mandatory, in-person education for all trappers.

Thank you very much for your time,
Amy VanderTuig
Denver, CO

Dear Mr. Vore,

As I make periodic trips to Montana, I write to express my opinion about the proposed trapping regulations before you today. I respectfully urge that you make the following amendments to current law:

- Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet.
- Require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.
- Require a 24-hour trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e., illness). A trapper who does not comply with these rules should lose his/her license for a year. For a second offense, the trapper should lose his/her license for life.
- Require that all animals caught in traps be reported. This is helpful to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, companion animals and livestock.
- Require all trappers to be licensed and regulated. (Trappers who trap "predators" currently escape general trapping regulations.)
- Designate several trap-free areas in every Montana county.
- Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource (the animals being trapped).
- Require trappers to compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma.
- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.
- Suspend recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change.
- Require mandatory, in-person education for all trappers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Valerie Traina
San Diego, CA

I am writing because I am concerned about trapping in Montana, and I think certain aspects should be better regulated to address safety risks to the public, and to prevent people and pets from suffering needlessly due to trapping.

First, I think there should be mandatory trapper education. Traps have the potential to kill or injure animals besides the ones targeted and I believe trappers should be educated in making traps as specific as possible for their target species. Hunters have to go through gun safety training. Why don't trappers have to go through a trap-education program? I also think that all trappers should have to get licensed, not just those trapping fur-bearers.

I know of at least 2 cases around Helena in the past few months where a person's pet has been injured by traps when they were out for a hike, and I believe traps should not be set so close to roads and trails. A minimum distance of 500 feet should be mandated, and if a trapper catches a domestic pet they should be required to release the animal from the trap, care for it, and notify the pet's owner so the person can get proper veterinary care for their pet.

As someone who works and often hikes in the backcountry, away from established roads and trails, I would like to see mandatory signing or flagging of traps so I know where they are and can avoid them. I believe this would help people with pets steer clear of the traps as well, and eliminate a lot of collateral damage and upset.

Please share my comments at the Trapping Advisory Committee.

Thank you,

Kadie Gullickson

January 30, 2019
Ms. Bernadette M. Sonefeld
Aurora, CO

Dear Mr. Vore,

Please do your best to outlaw the barbaric steel jaw traps for animal wildlife.

Sincerely,
Bernadette M. Sonefeld

I love Montana (and live in Colorado) but urge you to cease using the steel traps that cause horrific painful deaths to animals.

Sincerely,
Marelise Beckmann
Denver, Colo.

Dear Mr. Vore,

As you are aware, animals can be left in traps for days because trappers do not come back and check them regularly. This is unacceptable. As well, these traps are indiscriminate and too often pet cats and dogs fall victim to them - equally unacceptable, of course.

I would ask that you please consider requiring a 24-hour trap-limit check, and any trapper who does not complete should lose his/her license. As well, there must be mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps. All trappers must be licensed and regulated. Trapping is a serious venture. It is only fair that trappers be required to compensate the owners of pet victims for vet bills and trauma. Please suspend recreational trapping of beaver to help battle climate change and ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitats. Trapping in endangered species' habitats is extremely irresponsible. Lastly, trapping is not safe for many, so signage must be posted at trail heads and setbacks for all types of traps must be increased from trails and roads to 500 feet.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nancy Gregory

Greetings Mr. Vore,

I wanted to make you aware of the issues around indiscriminate recreational trapping and hope to make you aware that we do have an interest in this and it is very important to us.

First, we request that the setback for all traps, including water sets are increased to 500 feet from trails and roads. We also request improved required signage where traps are set, or where they are legally set. Additionally, we request a 24-hour trap limit check with penalty for not checking loss of license for 1 year upon first offense and second offense loss of license for life. We also ask that reporting of animals trapped be required to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species

(endangered species, domestic animals and livestock). All trappers should be licensed and regulated (predator trappers are not regulated). Trap free areas should be designated in every county of the state. The price of a trapping license should be raised to be more in line with the consumption of a precious resource. Trappers must compensate pet victims owners for vet bills and trauma. Trapping recreationally should be banned in the habit areas of endangered species and trapping of beaver should be suspended to combat climate change. Education for trappers must be completed in person with a test at the end of the day.

Thank you for your time and please take these thoughts into consideration.

Jennifer Jankovich

VERBAL and WRITTEN COMMENTS AT MEETING

Public Comment for the Montana Trapping Advisory Committee, 1/31-2/1/19

In closing of your assigned tasks, I sincerely hope you support the following:

- **Mandatory reporting of all trapped species.**
Only 5 of 18 legally trapped species must be reported!
The regulations do not require the reporting of trapped protected wildlife in non-wolf trap sets deemed “uninjured”. This determination usually falls on the trapper. These are obvious contradictions to the claim trapping is highly regulated.
- **Quotas, shortened seasons and closed areas for the trapping of beaver.**
Currently beaver can be trapped unlimited, unreported for recreational purposes 5½ -9 months out of the year. This contracts the best available science and vital role beavers play for wetlands and watersheds.
- **Closure of trapping on rare species such as swift fox and fisher.**
It is scientifically irresponsible to allow the continued trapping of rare species just because trappers want to. There is no shortage of the number of species trappers can trap and most are trapped without limits. As renown wildlife biologist and former trapper, Chuck Jonkel states: “The days of trapping are over. It’s now time to preserve Montana’s wildlife.”
- **Support 24 hr trap checks to minimize pain, suffering and irreversible damage. At best support HB287** in which language was modified to daily trap checks, i.e. once per calendar day, to give trappers more leeway than a strict 24 hour trap check requirement. According to the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, trappers should check their traps at least once every day. HB287 also allows, under special circumstances, a trapper to give permission to a licenses trapper to tend to their traps.
- **Support LC538 Mandatory Trapper Education Bill** sponsored by Representative Bridget Smith of Wolf Point. The bill encompasses many of the good ideas brought forth and approved previously by the Montana Wildlife Commissioners. The bill seeks to address public concerns as well as recommendations discussed by the Trapping Advisory Committee.

Thanks you for your efforts to try to come together for the betterment of our precious wildlife and as a reputable guiding resource for FWP & Commissioners.

KC York

Trap Free Montana Public Lands

Trap Free Montana

Marc Cooke – Wolves of the Rockies

Faith in process

Committee members said they would listen and compromise – but not happening

KC York – Trap Free Montana Public Land

Rep. Smith’s Trapper Education bill in final draft LC538

Bill has much of what the committee has discussed

Trap check bill has daily – calendar day – and exceptions

Harold Johnson – Eastern Montana – Vice President Montana Trappers Association East

Trappers follow rules

Trapping is income

Problems with process

Dogs not an issue
Leave eastern Montana alone

Scott Blackman – Great Falls area
Can't put time on trap check that will work
Agree on something

Dave Wallis – Kila
Trap check no
Trapper education yes

Betsy Brandborg – Helena
Had dogs trapped three times, son trapped once
Need more than 50 foot setbacks, want 500 feet
Mandatory signing
Should have trap free zones in many places
West side of Big Belts should be trap free zone

John Hughes – Fourth Generation Montanan
What will more regulations do to Montana heritage
Was on 1999 council
Trapping Advisory Committee should meet periodically from now on
Wants more hunting and trapping
Should be able to keep a mountain lion if caught unintentionally
Change bobcat tagging to after season is over
No trap check time

Jeff Rader – Livingston
Trappers skeptical about process
Process started with the premise there would be a trap check time
How many wanton waste citations have there been
Trap check time is a solution in search of a problem

Sam Dike (sp?) – Harrison
Pro education
Anti trap check

Ian Thomas – Missoula
Need signage
Must have permit to walk dogs on state land
Everyone shares the woods, so people need to be aware that there may be traps
There is new and better equipment for trapping

Leo Christensen – Harrison
A 24-hour trap check would scare animals away from traps with human scent, etc.

Dave Wallis
Signage allows others to violate and disturb traps
In western Montana a 24-hour trap check is infeasible because it would cost too much to check traps

Cory Richman (sp?)

Disease of coyotes and wolves – Neosporis Canis (sp?)

Ranchers want trappers

Checks traps 48 – 72 hours

State lands require 72-96 hour trap check (Mike Kring, FWP warden, noted that the DNRC area manager sets specific regs)

Rich Stuker – F&W Commissioner – Chinook

Consensus weighs well with the commission

Tim Harris – Conrad

Against trap check

The wolf trap check is a problem for trappers

Mike Green – on Woolgrowers board – Jordan

Let committee decide what makes sense on trap check and other issues

Trusts there will be consensus and common sense

KC York – Trap Free Montana Public Lands

TFMPL did not bring I-177 forward

Scott Blackman

Lion depredation on sheep is a problem

Feds have to put up signs and people tripped traps

Signage is a two-way street

Lost 17 sheep to lions

Judd Brooks, Vaughn. Takes issue with Mark Cooke's statement that trapping will be gone in 50 years.

Necessary service provided to public now for free by trappers. If gone this will be a cost to the public.

Tim McKenrick, Boulder. 40% mail survey response rate is actually higher response rate because

houndsmen have to purchase a license but do not respond.

Bert Wurstner, Missoula. Trapper education program has been developed. Disappointed that it has to

be handled by state legislature even after approved by commission.

Corey Richwine, Florence? Checks his traps 48-72 hours and does not see damage to animals. A 24-hr

check means cannot trap on ranches for disease and livestock protection. Animals are very capable of healing and surviving injury also.

KC York, Hamilton. Presented Bridgette Smith's LC538 unofficial draft for trapper education. Beaver

were protected until 1953. Please close fisher and swift fox trapping of rare animals. Mandatory reporting

is necessary for scientific management. Cited some numbers from the incidentals report.

Mark Cooke, Bitterroot Valley. Quentin only talked about Representative Doane's bill. This was unfair

and steering the politics away from Smith's bill. Also stated that he has now developed good relationships with many of the trappers.

Mike Green, Jordan, Wool Growers. Appreciates group working on topic. Thanks for time. Trapping protected by the constitution. Trapping very important for producers.

Betsy Brandborg, Helena. Recreates in West Belts. Dog caught in trap previously. Has hearing problem and dog was screaming and she could not determine where it was (out of sight). Asking for larger setbacks and trap free zone in west belts. Beaver have not made it a full year in west belts.

Official from Senator Steve Daines office. Here listening to discussion.

Ian Thomas, Missoula. It is not fair to place all of the burden on trappers. Other recreationists, including do owners, must do their part to share the landscape. One hundred feet of setback is a long way for a dog to roam within.

Cathy Richwine, Florence? Trappers are defensive about their activity due to the constant and repeated attacks upon them.

Bert Wustner, Missoula. There was a bomb threat related to a public meeting about wolf management that the FBI acted upon after the threat remained posted on Trap Free Montana's facebook page for 5 days.
