

Montana Trapping Advisory Committee Public Comments for Fifth Meeting
Email Comments (43)1

To whom it may concern:

I am a frequent visitor to Montana. However, I am appalled that Montana still permits the trapping of animals in the state. Trapping is incredibly inhumane. In addition, it often traps our pets. Please put an end to this horrific practice!

Gail Bell
Denver, CO

To: Trapping Committee, c/o John Vore,

Thank you for the opportunity to write, I wish I could attend the meeting but can't travel that far in the week.

As a native Montanan who is an avid trail runner/hiker and a dog owner (and has family similar), I am very concerned about the lack of regulations around trapping in Montana. Nothing scares me more on our trails than the potential of pets being caught in these inhumane (to all animals) traps.

I am also a hunter & our family has hunted a lot in Montana, mostly with bow or muzzleloaders. I fully support sustenance-based and humane hunting. I do NOT believe that trapping should be allowed and that it is an antiquated and cruel way of indiscriminately killing animals. At the VERY least, there should be much more regulation around it, as well as education about the potential affects to hikers best-friends (or hikers). These regulations should include at a minimum a MUCH greater set back- at least 500', posting at ANY trailhead that allows trapping, MANY more trapping-free areas, required reporting and a MUCH higher fee for this! I have been really disappointed and shocked to learn of the lack of regulation around this, and the extreme dangers.

My parents dog was caught in a trap, this is just not okay in this day and age.

Thank you for your consideration & time on this matter.

Best~
Meghan
Bitterroot Valley, MONTANA

No more trapping regulations please!!
Thanks!!
Joshua Fields

Dear John,

I am writing to express my support for banning trapping on public lands. The cost of pelts does not even cover driving to the locations. Which means people doing this still have developed a thrill of killing for no reason. They also harm innocent animals and humans, I'm sure you've seen that evidence on social media platforms.

A respectful person who has morals and loves things to thrive in the wild will know that this is not a hard decision. Thank you for your consideration and listening to my opinion as a Montana resident who spends lots of times outdoors.

Sincerely,
Sarah Thurmond

Greetings my name is Roc Lee. I'm a resident of Park county Montana. I'm a sportsman and a professional trapper. Trapping for me began in 1996, mainly for recreation. My fascination for the outdoors and capturing and handling fur has grown into a full time job in the last two decades. For 25 percent of the year my sole income comes from the sale of the fur I can produce by catching coyotes in several counties for dozens of landowners. These landowners count on me for predator control since Wildlife Services does very little preventative predator control anymore. A mandatory 24 hr check would prevent 90 percent of my existing work. More calves would be killed. More fawns would be killed. Wildlife Services fly's seasonally and only show up when there is a problem. If all these ranchers are having a problem at the same time, then what?? This all translates into lost revenue from our economy. Montana is just too large of a state for a 24 hr check to be practical. Besides, if you showed up everyday to check your traps or snares, you would rarely catch any animals. The trapping area needs time without human activity for animals to move through naturally. A 24 hour check would prevent animal movement and then there would be no point in setting traps. Without trapping, predator populations would need to be reduced another way or livestock and wildlife numbers will suffer. Montana is an opportunity state, it always has been. For example you can hunt elk for 6 months here while most states give you a few weeks. For the last two decades more regulation has been applied to trapping. Species like the wolverine and lynx have been removed from the trapping regulations. Quotas have been reduced and in general trapping is proving to be more difficult with the restricted regulations. A 48 hr recommended check has worked and will continue to work. Some of the landowners I trap for have threatened to come out of block management if these regulations keep popping up. They are tired of it and so are we. I realize trapping can be a sensitive topic for some and I know it's not for everyone. We should all remember that fur trappers were some of the first people to travel through and settle in the land we all call home. I believe responsible trapping has it's place in today's world. A 24 hr mandatory trap check is bad for cattle, deer and elk and bad for montana.

Roc Lee
Livingston MT

Dear sir,

I am asking you to oppose any more forced trap check time intervals. Given the distances between pavement in Montana, the potential for extreme weather conditions and the spotty cell service in the West half of the state forced trap checks are not only unfeasible but potentially deadly. Forcing a trap check will put people who trap, FWP personnel and inevitably Search and Rescue personnel at unnecessary risk. Forcing a trap check to retrieve a marten that was frozen solid 2 hours after it was caught or a beaver under the ice would be, under some circumstances, a reckless endangerment of peoples lives. Wasting a furbearer is already a misdemeanor per Montana law *MCA 87-2-521*. Also the present trap check intervals for wolves and in the lynx protection of 48hrs is not reasonable. People can arrive at the first trap at 48hrs but what happens when they add lure or deal with an animal and are 48hrs 5 minutes to the next trap and are now criminals. And when a trap check is required by law the term "visually check their traps" should be amended to include electronic trap monitoring devices such as those used by government biologists and professional trappers. Please share my comment with the rest of the committee.

Respectfully,
Mike Laird
Dillon, MT

Hi John,

I just wanted share a couple of concerns about trapping and trapping-related issues. It seems that we're operating in the dark regarding who traps what & where in Montana. Yes, I know there are licenses, but in no way is trapping regulated or monitored like it hunting is. In other words, trappers do not have to take trapper safety, report kills (species, numbers, locations), or be limited to a reasonable "take." Furthermore, because trapping is so indiscriminate, there's no telling (for certain) what types of animals will be killed. This is especially troublesome in light of the fact that there are many "unintended" kills. Would we let a deer hunter kill a moose, a cow, a horse, and an elk in the effort to get one deer? No, we would not! So why is it permitted for trappers? We are encouraging trappers to be irresponsible by not limiting the numbers of animals killed and specifying which types can be killed and mandating safety training and 24-hour trap checks. Do we let hunters shoot into herds and, a few days later, go back to check to see what got killed or how many? No, we do not. If trappers want the respect we accord to hunters, Montana needs to layout some strict, careful guidelines that ensure public safety, limit trapping to specific places and species, and guarantee that trappers are acting ethically.

I'm also concerned about the fact that some species that are trapped are really essential for the overall health of our watersheds--beavers, for instance. If Montana ever wants to get out of the flood-drought-flood-drought cycle, or to restore its riparian habitats for moose and other wildlife, we've got to stop killing or relocating beavers. Trapping of beavers or in/along streams just flat-out needs to be made illegal. Presently, beavers are being reintroduced on ranches and even on some public lands throughout the west so that stream flows can be preserved, wetlands brought back, and habitats improved. Montana needs to get with the program!

Finally, we have to ask what trapping is for in the 21st century--more than a century after the end of the real fur trade. Our economy and our resources have changed. Our human population has

grown exponentially. And we have new cold-weather fabrics. It's no longer essential to turn fur-bearing animals into mittens, mukluks, boots, coats, or hats. In fact, furs are--and have been for a long time--regarded as "luxury" wear. The critters trapped here are, by and large, shipped out of county (China, Russia, etc) and made into clothing most people cannot afford. Or, they are simply wasted: hung up on the wall of a luxury cabin for the out-of-staters to gawk at, like we're stuck in the 1800s.

So, what is the trapping today for, besides killing for sport or glamour? We don't allow hunters to kill innumerable numbers of moose or elk and ship the meat to Russia or Asia. Why allow it for hides? We don't allow hunters to kill deer, elk, or moose just to throw the meat away--nope, nearly all Montana hunters say they hunt for the meat, primarily. And I don't hear of any trappers eating skunks, badgers, foxes, fishers, wolverines, minks, martins, weasels, coyotes, beavers, otters, lynxes, bobcats, or the occasional dog that gets trapped. These animals are killed **JUST FOR THE SAKE OF KILLING**. Back in the day (as in, back in the 1870s), when wildlife seemed "too many to count" some people killed in this way. Today, it doesn't take a genius to see that there just aren't "too many to count" of anything in Montana, except maybe mosquitos. So why do we pretend this is a "great tradition" when, in fact, the Montana fur trade--**REAL** fur trade--just lasted a few decades, then faded away. Today's trappers bear no resemblance to the trapper of old, nor do we "need" trapping to fuel the economic security of the state. Meanwhile, trapping does pose a real and measurable threat to the viability of several species, riparian health, public safety, and Montana's hunters' ethic.

I encourage you to take every step to raise the standards, limit the kills, ensure safety, prevent killing of certain species (lynx, wolverine, bobcat, and beavers, for starters), and get Montana's trapping "industry" out of the 19th century.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.
Sincerely,
Laura Ferguson
Helena, MT

Please help improve trapping laws in Montana with the following recommendations:

Please require all trappers be regulated and licensed and be required to check traps every 24 hours, raise the price of the license fee & require mandatory in-person education for all trappers. Also require mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps. Designate trap-free areas in Montana.

Thank you-
Lorissa ArgoRay

Their should not be a 24 hr trap check invoked.
Craig Savage

Mr. Vore,

I am writing you with my opinions that I would like passed on to the Trappers Advisory Committee. It seems there is a non stop effort to limit and eventually eliminate the use of trapping as a management tool in Montana. This country is viciously divided these days between people who want to continue activities, such as trapping, ranching, logging, mining, hunting, and fishing etc., and those who wish to see everything from our past from a consumptive use standpoint come to an end. All of these industries are largely misunderstood by a growing percentage of our society as our population gets further and further from the land.

I oppose the further regulation of trappers in the state of Montana. By instituting a mandatory check time law it will greatly hinder our ability to manage fur bearers and non game animals in the state. Montana is a huge state and vast amounts of country can become inaccessible virtually overnight. This would create hazards for everyone trying to comply with a mandatory check time. It also limits the ability financially for a trapper to work multiple areas at one time. Predators are a separate issue as FWP has no jurisdiction to control predators or the means to take on coyotes. This has been set as a precedent for a long time. A perfect example of this is that when a convicted wildlife offender has his or her privileges revoked in the state there has been no way to prevent that individual from taking coyotes by trapping. Trying to regulate the take on a predator would indeed create an issue and the regulation would be unenforceable. The only person that knows the intended catch for any trap set is the person who set the trap, no one else. If law enforcement is asked to assume they know the intent of the trapper and prove that intent in court there is going to be problems arise.

A mandatory check law also creates an issue with private property by being involved in deciding how often a person needs to enter a piece of property to maintain traps. This decision should be between the trapper and the land owner or manager. Agriculture is still the number one industry in the state of Montana and our farmers and ranchers will continue to need assistance with predator control as well as well as furbearing and non game species. To further hinder a trappers ability to work will be seen as an attack on landowners and managers as well as those who rely on fur sales for supplemental and/or seasonal income.

I understand that trapping is a controversial subject to a few people. This is due to a lot of misinformation being spread by groups that wish to do trappers harm. Mother nature is in fact a cruel place at times where animals are forced to succumb to drought, disease, starvation etc. without any management. Having the trap as a tool and the trappers judgement of how to maintain this tool is a vital role we as humans play in the management of Montana's wildlife. I may also add that trappers provide this service free of charge to benefit Montana's publicly owned wildlife just as the private landowners in this state provide some the best habitat for them to thrive. Lets leave well enough alone and let them do their job.

Respectfully,

Neal Green
Melville, MT

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you tonight to urge the much needed changes for wildlife management. In particular new legislation that would extend current trapping seasons, reduce setbacks for trapping, reimburse ethical hunters and trappers for expenses incurred while harvesting wolves, and reintroduce ungulates in areas impacted by wolves and mounting lions.

To start with I wish to let you know a little about myself. I grew up in the Yaak Valley (very NW MT) where my grand parents homesteaded in 1963, both grandparents and my father worked for the Forest Service and my grandparents retired from the FS. Growing up with a family that loved the out doors I spent the majority of time in the remote timber country hunting elk and deer and as a young hunter.

After highschool I decided to pursue a degree in pre professional wildlife officer from the university in Dillon but due to a major illness and mounting medical bills had to stop on my third year. While I never got to pursue this career I have always had a passion for conservation and a bit of a

whitetail nut and over the years have seen changes in both deer behavior, hunting pressure, predator influence and habitat changes that has given me some insight on public land whitetail hunting over the past 15 years.

I have been able to fill my tag every year with a 4 point or better though I don't as they have not matched my requirements for a hard fair chase hunt and am on my 6th year of not taken a deer as opportunity for a better age class deer has become extremely rare.

There has been some major changes that have occurred that have made me conclude that the deer population is in my opinion

is not doing well. From my experiences and observation I write you the following. A decrease in deer sightings during one consecutive hunting day and during off season.

I hike in the dark and walk out in the dark and went from an average 35 deer/day in 2006 to 5 deer/day in 2018 in the same location and same hunting patterns and new ones. I ended up having to switch multiple locations including Thompson Falls area, East Kootenai, and the upper and lower Swan. Results varied but typically the higher number of deer in other locations I was still seeing and continued

decline. I have also had to switch tactics as I found that deer while lower then past years have for the majority have concentrated on private lands and even then hunting along private lands declines eventually came.

It now has come to the point where it will be cheaper to buy an OTC tag in Colorado for cow elk or OTC tag for deer in Idaho compared to cost of hunting locally as the deer population is no longer deemed able to produce enough deer to make it worth while. I have already sent two friends from Vermont to Kansas and Idaho for whitetail and plan on recommending both to continue looking for whitetail elsewhere until deer numbers rise and better age class for bucks comes back. Hunting out of state loses funds for conservation in Montana but if I am and the parties I represent are not seeing good wildlife management why invest into Montana when there is greener pastures elsewhere. I spent 13 days in the field this year with a high of 8 deer in one day and 2 1/2 year old buck being my largest. Mind you I hit 3 hunting districts and covered 35 miles and 45 hours of tree stand time. The numbers are lacking and cost have gone beyond that

of an out of state hunt. I am only telling you this because besides 2018 past years have seen a decline in hunting tags sold and if that is a trend the only way to reverse it is improving the hunting experience that we all love and know and is part of what makes Montana so great.

In conclusion I have made well over 15 letters to multiple agencies, government representatives, and organizations pleading for changes from stricter deer regulations too better forest management hoping to see results. In turn I am writing too you about the other elephant in the room predators. Wolves met management goals over a decade ago and have gone beyond a success story to a major concern for their prey deer and elk. I am not talking to you as a hunter but as a conservationist. I hope you take my words seriously as I feel we are at a turning point for the worst and these words are becoming more of a plea instead of a letter of concern. Thank you for reading.

Wyatt Franke- Kalispell/Troy, MT

John Vore
Trapping Advisory Committee Chairman

January 29, 2019

Mr. Vore and committee members,

I am submitting this letter as my public comment for the Trapping Advisory Board meeting to be held in Great Falls, Mt on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1.

I personally believe it is time to ban most trapping on all public lands. The practice of trapping animals for fur is not only immoral and cruel it is unnecessary today. Although natural furs are beautiful, superior synthetic fabrics simulating furs are now available in the market. I would rather observe real wildlife than someone wearing dead ones. This is not the 1800's!

The only trapping on public lands I can consider is if done by agencies and their cooperators for research and/or to remove specific problem animals (I would hope the agencies would adhere to stricter guidelines and more humane methods). I also can support respectful trapping primarily on tribal lands by Native Americans for their spiritual and cultural preservation. To claim that it is recreation, livelihood and or cultural heritage for others is a poor excuse to kill and abuse animals. Just because our fathers, grandfathers and so on trapped does not mean it is justified.

Furthermore, I question how any of the regulations can be enforced. There is not enough manpower, time or money to send someone out to check to see if traps are set lawfully. Since you don't require exact trap placement sites how can the laws even be enforced? There are probably plenty of private landowner's who would allow trappers on their land as they do for hunters so if trappers want to trap they should start asking permission from private landowners and quit taking advantage of cheap licenses and public resources.

As an avid hiker, biker and skier with a dog I have a right to use the public land a trapper uses without fearing for the safety of my dog getting hurt or killed in a hidden trap.

Until the day comes when the public votes for the ban of trapping on public lands I am recommending the following changes to the current regulations.

- Mandatory warning signs where trapping is active including exact site location.
- All setbacks from trails, roads should be at least 500 feet (not just in high use areas.)
- Water traps should only be allowed on rivers, creeks and waterways on private lands with permission. (the body-grip traps are the most lethal and likely to trap non-target species and there are no distance of setbacks required)
- There should be a mandatory 24-hour trap check. (Animals should not have to suffer even that long and non target species should be released before that)
- Trapper education should be mandatory and all trappers should be required to get licenses.
- License Fees should go up significantly to cover loss of precious resources.
- The predator class of animals i.e. coyote, weasel and skunks should only be trapped on private lands. (Since they are considered threats to livestock, trapping on private lands might be justified but they are needed as predators in the natural ecosystem. Ranchers grazing on public lands need to realize their animals are at risk of being attacked by predators.)
- There should be no trapping of wolves. (There is already a hunting season on wolves. Hunting with a gun is less cruel and since the wolf is then a visible target there is not a threat to non-target species. It is not necessary to have both hunting and trapping of wolves.)
- **Trappers must compensate pet victims owner for vet bills and trauma**
- 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.

As a wildlife and wild lands conservationist I advocate ending the senseless, cruel and unnecessary trapping on public lands. Let's start being more respectful, responsible and ethical in our treatment of wildlife.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan P. Lanning
Clyde Park, MT 59018

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.

Sincer

Sandy Lowell

It makes it almost impossible to traps with an every 24 hours checking requirement. Even 48 hours is very difficult. You need to make at least 4 day or even 7. Our wolf population in NW Montana is out of control. You need to give us more tools not make it more difficult. You need to consider snares eve if there is some by catch it would be little compared to what the predators kill.

Darwon Stoneman

Dear Mr. Vore,

Though I'm not a resident of Montana, I would like to express my concern about the current proposed trapping regulations. I respectfully urge you to consider:

- 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).

- 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 giving this matter consideration.

Marty Schur

Denver, Co

I am writing because I am concerned about recent pet injuries around the Helena area due to trapping. I have learned much about trapping over the last few months and I think there needs to be better oversight.

1. We need to have mandatory trapper education so that everyone understands laws and regulations and so that trappers can receive information about how to handle animals as humanely as possible.
2. There needs to be a further setback distance from roads and trails to help reduce chances of pets becoming trapped.
3. Mandatory 24 hour trap checks to help reduce suffering.
4. All trapped animals should be reported. If a pet becomes trapped, the trapper should be required to contact the owners and help get the pet to a vet for evaluation, not simply free an injured animal.
5. Licenses for all trappers not just fur-bearer trappers

We all love being outdoors in Montana. We should work together to ensure that our public lands are safe for everyone to use and enjoy.

Please forward this to the Trapping Advisory Committee.

Thank you,
Andrea Hedblom

January 30, 2019

Dear Members of the Trapping Advisory Committee,

The most urgent recommendation I hope you consider is **licensing and regulating all trappers, and requiring all trappers to report all animals trapped.**

There are only 4,119 licensed fur bearer trappers, but no one knows how many other trappers trap predators and non-game wildlife. These trappers are exempt from licenses and reporting, even as species dwindle, and no records are kept.

Fur bearer trappers can kill unlimited numbers of beaver, otter, muskrat, mink and pine marten without reporting them. This lax regulation undermines scientific wildlife management and threatens the survival of many species.

It's widely known that otters are growing scarce, fishers barely make it, even pine martens are becoming rare, to name a few. It's clear that habitat is diminishing for all wildlife as Montana

gets populated. If trapping is to continue, it will have to be regulated. We no longer live in a free and wild place where the taking of our wildlife doesn't matter.

We live in Montana and we all love wildlife. We have a responsibility to protect it. This is 2019, not 1819. We must work together to keep Montana a real refuge for the nation's rare and iconic wildlife. Please commit to licensing and regulating all trappers, and requiring all trappers to report all animals trapped.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Poten
Montana resident 47 years
Missoula, MT

can't make your meeting. who runs the fish and game? do our legislators? can't do a 24 hour trap check, not where i live on the flathead reservation, takes over an hour one way to get off it from where i live. does the trappers advisory committee report to the governor appointed commission? then what? who makes the rules? ANTIES? trapping takes a lot of my time and money, i trap wolves because there are to many and it seems every year some one is trying to make it more difficult. wild life services can trap on the reservation but i can't, government trappers can trap on roads in my off season i can't. let me trap on dry ground instead of the snow and i will get wolves. got three so far, it is tough, 48 hour trap check works but 72 would be better. i believe in off set jaws, center swivels, end swivels and shock springs.

Dan Thingelstad

The current trapping regulations regarding wolves in Montana are unrealistic. The country out here is vast and spread out which makes checking traps every 24 hours or even ever 48 hours almost impossible.

There needs to be at a minimum 4 day, but more realistically 7 day time frame for checking traps. It would also be worth further considering the use of snares as well. Yes, there might be some by catch in the snares but it would be very little compared to what the predators are already doing to our deer and elk populations.

The wolf population in northwest Montana is simply out of control and needs to be addressed in a more aggressive manner.

Jeff Baldelli

Jeff Baldelli | Co-owner & Outfitter
Glacier Raft Company | Glacier Anglers

John , I attenattended a Sportsmans meeting in Kalispell last evening that was attended by 300 plus people. All present were in agreement that there needs to be No further trapping restrictions passed, especially regulations that would further restrict wolf management. I sincerely hope you

take this into consideration when you go before the commissioners with your TAC meeting recommendations.

Sincerely,
Dan Helterline
MTA R1 Director
MTSFW Director

Hi John,

This is my first ever letter trying to persuade someone to use their position and power to support a critical issue that I'm advocating for.

So please, with all sincerity, Please hear me out.

I live in Sanders County but have resided in Flathead, Lincoln and Lake Counties and have enjoyed the entire state for hunting & fishing.

Now, However, I'm pursuing Trapping to help effectively manage a huge problem we've encountered over the last decade with wolves. I've seen the negative impact firsthand with our ungulate populations.

We put our blood, sweat, tears (and even Amniotic Fluid) into successfully harvesting wild game to stock our freeze for our family. But the last several years have been increasingly frustrating and fruitless, regardless of the time and effort we've put in!

We spend so much money to be licensed and to be out in the field, but the odds are against us. Please don't put any further restrictions on Trapping Wolves!

I'd love to share my family photos from our hunting adventures with you. We've got 2 daughters and a son who are learning valuable life lessons through our time spent in forests around our home town of Plains. But the wolves are terrorizing our God-Given Livestock and I long for a tasty elk steak! I'd even grill one up for you to enjoy yourself!

Sincerely,
Rachel Doble

Dear John,

My name is Katie Coyle, I'm a native Montanan and resident of Bozeman. Reaching out to you around the issue of public trapping as I know you are in meetings currently to discuss.

I understand that you have many constituents to appease, but I urge you to consider the long-term implications of trapping. Humans have already encroached upon and laid waste to millions of acres of previous habitat, why must we continue with the outdated and cruel practice of trapping?

I imagine you already know that Montana is a very dog friendly state, we're also an avid outdoor recreation state. Those two factors alone should be given consideration in your discussions. Trappers do not need to trap to survive in most instances, why should they have the right to kill and or severely injure pets?

With the current state of our politics and the lack of long-term vision of many politicians who choose greed over the good of the people, please consider doing what is right for humans, dogs and the ecosystems we are efficiently destroying.

Thank you,
Katie

Dear John,

Please share our comments with the Trapping Advisory Committee:

We are both avid hikers and outdoorspeople. We also have pets, and over the years have had incidents involving both leg hold and conibear traps. The conibear almost killed our dog.

We haven't hiked in the National Forests for some years during the winter months due to the proliferation of traps and snares, even in areas commonly used by recreationists.

This is not right, that we should have to fear recreating with our pets to please a very small percentage of people that trap. The trappers impact everyone else in order to make a profit.

Please vastly extend setbacks from trails, and also create multiple large areas that are trap free each winter where people can go without apprehension.

Trappers should also be liable for injured pets. They claim often that their devices do not injure animals caught in them, so that shouldn't be an issue. Snares, of course, are another issue, as they are designed to be fatal. If trappers were liable, it would encourage more responsible placement of trapping devices.

Michael and Lynn Koeppen

300 Bull Run
Florence, MT 59833

I would like to voice my concern with this 24 hour trap check. Please say NO to this !! how could a working person actually check traps on a every 24 hour basis?? This is just an anti trapping bill and is goes against our Montana heritage. I currently am not a trapper but, I see this bill for what it is ... anti trapping. please put an end to this nonsense. Thank you Troy Bungay lifelong Montana resident

I beg you to do the most you can to protect animals when it comes to trapping. Nothing about this practice is fair to the animal.

People rarely wear fur anymore and the public greatly enjoys seeing the wildlife wear their own fur.

Charlotte Heldstab Whitefish, MT

Mr. Vore,

As a resident and landowner in Montana I am deeply concerned about the dangers to people, pets and wildlife caused by indiscriminate recreational trapping. Below are issues which I feel should be considered in the establishment of trapping regulations to be addressed by the Trapping Advisory Committee meeting being held in Great Falls.

- 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 your attention to these important issues.

Respectfully,

Cliff Wenzek
Whitefish, MT

I am a native Montanan who has lived most of my life in the state. I do not hunt, rarely fish, but very much enjoy viewing wildlife.

I urge you to consider the perspectives of those who want to walk their dogs without risk of an expensive or fatal injury to their pets. Signage, reasonable setbacks (500 feet or more) and no trap areas are not a major imposition on trappers.

I also urge you to adopt mandatory 24-hour trap checks. Sparing animals needless suffering is a fundamental concern for most of us.

The indiscriminate nature of trapping makes species-specific concerns of virtually no consequence. Even so, I'd rather we preserve the small number of fishers that are still in our forests than allow trapping in their territories. Continued trapping of the swift fox is beyond my understanding when there are so few of the species in our state.

Also, it seems to me that trappers should be obligated to disclose what they have killed in order to assist FWP in its management role.

One of my interests is Montana history. I know the role that trapping played in the development of our state. Just because trapping was important once doesn't make it significant today. If we can't abolish this incredibly cruel practice, then please take steps to reduce its cruelty.

Dennis Lopach

Greetings. I'd like to share my feelings about trapping since decisions about it are coming up.

I consider it an ancient and respected art, but it needs to be modified for today out of concern for wildlife and for domestic animal and human safety.

Some specific ideas that would make it more acceptable to modern Montanans:

I'd like to see setbacks increased for all traps (water sets too) from trails and roads from 50 feet to 500 feet. Signage at trailheads where traps are or can be legally set is such a great idea! Not knowing that they're there is one of the worst things about this for, for example, people with dogs. It would be great if trappers have a 24-hour trap-limit check, and real consequences for not checking, like losing their license the first time they found in noncompliance, and for life, the second time. Let's monitor the situation by requiring mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps: targeted animals and non-targeted species including endangered species, domestic animals, and livestock. This would give us so much information. It would be good if all trappers are licensed and regulated. There should be trap-free areas available throughout Montana. The cost of a trapping license should be greater than it currently is. Trappers should absolutely compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma! It only makes sense to ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat. I am against recreational trapping of beaver, and especially wolverine, if that's still happening, in the era of climate change. Trappers should be educated in person, not, say, online; they should be tested afterwards, and failed if they don't get it--this is serious.

Thanks for considering my views as you work on what's best and right for our animals and ourselves in Montana. Sincerely,

Beth Judy

Re: MFWP Trappers Advisory Committee

My husband and I are frequent visitors and we do also business in Montana and fly our corporate plane frequently to Butte (Montana Tech) and Helena. We are close friends of the late Tom Dyk who donated \$1 Million to Montana Tech

https://www.google.com/amp/s/mtstandard.com/news/local/oilman-alum-tom-dyk-gives-million-to-montana-tech/article_5b6ac8fc-e7c2-50f0-b76e-80f8cbaff16b.amp.html

We have many other ties in Montana. We would like you to know our thoughts on reforming trapping.

We deeply about the dangers to people and wildlife caused by indiscriminate recreational trapping. We are fully in support each of the following recommendations.

- 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. (predator trappers currently escape general trapping regulations)
- 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

We hope you will sincerely consider each of these changes.

Thank you-
Jason & Rachelle Hurd
Erie, Colorado

Dear John Vore,

There are many of us in Montana who care deeply about the dangers to wildlife and people from indiscriminate trapping. I wish to list several issues which are important not only to me but many in this state:

A 24-hour trap-limit check is absolutely necessary and 48 hours only under special circumstances. A trapper caught not checking traps within time limit loses license for a year. Second offense, loses license for life.

Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet. Additionally, signage of trail heads where traps are set or can be legally set should be required.

Mandatory reporting of all animals caught in traps should be required to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including endangered species, domestic animals and livestock.

All trappers should be required to be licensed and regulated.

Every Montana county should have designated trap-free areas.

The price of a trapping license (now \$20) should be raised substantially to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource. (State revenue from wildlife viewers who pay to see our amazing wildlife far outstrips trapping revenues; this will only increase as more and more habitat is lost.)

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 deserve a license.

Lastly, let's stop the secrecy of trapping and its realities. I see many sports stores' "bragging boards" of photos, newspaper headline articles, general sportsman magazines, and countless other forms of publicity boasting about the glamour of hunting and fishing. But where is the publicity and bragging about trapping? *Why is it so hidden and secretive?* If this is the *true sport* it claims to be, let's bring it out of the shadows and demand these trapping "sportsmen" ***prove it*** with their own public articles, photos, and detailed stories. They should be proud to brag it up;

fishermen and hunters sure are! In any case, the public deserves to know the *reality* of what is actually happening in order to make informed decisions about it if nothing else.

These ideas are nothing new but have been proposed countless times before by many others before me. They are reasonable, fair and justifiable.

Thank you sir,

Note: this person did not want their name made public

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.

Dr. Erica Rambus

Denver, CO

To The Montana House Fish and Wildlife Committee,

We are writing regarding HB 287 which requires that traps be checked daily. We are strongly in favor of this policy. We are avid and frequent backcountry users, enjoying our local areas in all seasons. We do not have a dog ourselves, but frequently get out with those who bring dogs. We also get out with our small grandchildren. Dogs and small children do not always stick to trails, and traps are often set very short distances from trails. We understand that 24 hour checking is not likely to help with children getting caught in traps, but it will with dogs (and possibly other domestic animals) who get inadvertently trapped. In addition, it will reduce suffering of legally trapped animals, and there is no reason whatsoever to cause needless suffering of these animals. Thirty-six other states have mandatory 24 hour trap check regulations. It appears to work just

fine in these 36 other states. Montana can become the thirty-seventh state to require that legal trapping remain as humane as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns.

Hillery Daily and Charles Mabbott
Darby, MT 59829

Dear John Vore,

Unfortunately, I am not able to attend the Trapping Advisory Committee meeting today, but I would like you to consider the following comments.

I have lived in Montana all my life, and I love walking and hiking with my black lab, Amiyah. The thought of her ever getting caught in a trap horrifies me! Even though I do keep her on a leash or by my side, the possibility of it happening is a definite concern. The current regulations do not do enough to keep the people of Montana that enjoy our great outdoors safe from traps!

Please consider the following changes:

- Increase setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads.
- Require signage at trailheads where traps are set or can be legally set.
- 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.
- 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,
Carrie Reisig
Great Falls

John

I am emailing you regarding trapping on public lands. Other than thinking trapping is a horrible thing and can't believe it is still done but please consider these other things:

Trappers must compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills

Traps need to be checked **REGULARLY!**

Require mandatory reporting of **ALL** animals caught in these dreadful things

Many other things as well but please do not increase allowed trapping to occur

Pam

Pam Guschausky
Great Falls, MT

Trapping Comments:

Hello-

I am unsure if my earlier letter of January 20th went anywhere.

I would like to see the state of Montana require the following from trappers:

1) Mandatory check periods-

Wasting game is illegal for other species and expectations should be the same for trappers.

2) Mandatory signage-

Having had the experience of saving my dog's life it is imperative for these areas to be signed so that all users of public land are safe.

3) Please remove the "restriction" on disturbing traps in an effort to save an animals life. It seem s senseless to assume anyone is going to let there animals suffer in order to follow the law.

4) I would also like to see a set back for beaver trap placement.

Thank you,

Shannon Walden

Fort Benton, MT

Dear John,

Please pass along to the Trapping Advisory Committee that I am concerned about the dangers to people and wildlife caused by indiscriminate recreational trapping. Some steps that could be taken that would reduce these dangers include:

1) Increasing setbacks for all traps, including water sets, from trails and roads to 500 feet from 50 feet to protect people and dogs from traps. Trappers must compensate pet victims' owners for vet bills and trauma.

2) Requiring 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. Letting animals stay in traps for a long period is cruel and inhumane.

3) Requiring all trappers to be licensed, educated in good trapping practices and regulated will help make better trappers.

4) Suspending recreational trapping of beaver to combat climate change. Montana is getting drier summers now and beavers help keep water in a watershed.

Thank you for passing these comments along!

Respectfully,

Louise

Louise Davis

9443 Cottonwood Rd

Bozeman, MT 59718

I am trapper in trout creek and I am aware of some of the trapper advisory Committee issues. The only thing I liked from the first three meetings was the deal on tagging bobcats after the season was over. I don't want shorter trap check times.

Thanks for your time

Jeff Smith

I heard recently that there are people in western Montana who want to be allowed to trap more wolves. I can't think of a worse request. Trapping is barbaric. It should be outlawed completely. If it were put to a vote, many of us believe trapping, and trapping wolves in particular, would be found to be unnecessary, unfair, and unwise by most Montanans. I understand that livestock owners need to protect their animals, but shooting a wolf would be more humane. Also, getting money for killing wolves is shameful. it would create a worse scenario of trappers and hunters killing wolves for money and recreation. Please communicate to the people you interact with that there are many people against these things and we are motivated to speak up more.

thanks for your time.

Po Hall

I understand that a group in western Montana are seeking permission to trap wolves in an attempt to protect their livestock. This is an inhuman approach. Trapped animals may spend many hours in a trap before they are put down. It puts other animals at risk including their own working dogs. What becomes of animals that are unintentionally trapped? Would a fox unintentionally trapped be taken to a veterinarian? I also understand that funding is being pursued from state and federal agencies for the shooting of wolves.

I firmly believe that this killing of wolves should not be allowed. I understand that this is an economic issue that can have an impact on rancher lively hoods, although there is a mechanism for payment for loss of livestock when certain criteria are met. I feel we cannot continue expanding into wild areas with grazing of livestock or housing development without a pushback from nature.

Thank you.

Michael Smith

Livingston Montana

To the Trapping Advisory Committee:

I am writing as a longtime resident of Ravalli County. I strongly believe that trapping should be more highly regulated because it would:

1. Reduce the suffering of lawfully trapped animals
2. Reduce the damage caused by inadvertent trapping of non-target species, including domestic dogs
3. Provide for science as much information as possible from trapping, to facilitate appropriate management decisions

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.

Some years back I was walking my dog on a USFS road about a mile from my home when she was caught in a trap practically along the roadside embankment. I was blessedly able to release her with vise grips from a nearby vehicle before her leg was permanently damaged and thereafter always carried vise grips, to be able to release a potentially trapped dog. Since coyote trapping and snaring are legal at all times, I even worry about entrapment when other seasons are closed. To reduce the inadvertent trapping of non-target species, setbacks from roads and trails should be increased significantly and confiscation/removal of traps located in violation of these setbacks be allowed and enforced.

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 my concerns.

Sincerely,

Laura Jackson
Hamilton, Montana 59840

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).
- 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.

And finally, I would urge you to require mandatory, in-person education for all trappers.

As a tourist to your beautiful state, I am very concerned about preserving its natural beauty, a huge part of which is its wild animals.

Thank you for your time.

Donna Marino
Boulder, Colorado

Feb. 4, 2019

To the Trapping Advisory Committee:

I'm a long time resident of the Bitterroot Valley and believe that trapping must be more regulated. The trapped animals suffer and dogs along with non target species are often caught. All traps should be checked every 24 hours to reduce suffering. Set backs from roads and trails must be increased to reduce the chance of dogs being caught. Mandatory reporting of all trapped animals should be required. This data would help FWP make adjustments for trapping regulations.

Thank you for taking my comments.

Sincerely,
Suzanna McDougal
Hamilton, MT

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.
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- 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.

Sincerely,
Sarah Witherell
Greeley, CO
