

Montana Trapping Advisory Committee Public Comments for Fifth Meeting
ADDENDUM – comments received after March 19, 2019 up to April 1, 2019 @ 5:00 P.M.
32 comments

Sir:

I was told that you are the public's contact for the Trapping Advisory Committee, which will meet next week (April 2 & 3). If this is not the case, please forward this e-mail to the appropriate person(s). Thank you.

As a member of the non-trapping public, I must speak out on trapping.

I am against trapping on public lands.

Wildlife on federal lands belong to all Americans; wildlife on Montana state lands belongs to all Montanans. We non-trappers prefer our wildlife healthy, footloose, and roaming free. Visitors to the State enjoy spotting wildlife in natural surroundings; witness the "bear (or moose) (or elk) jams" in the parks as just one example of the well-documented human affinity for wildlife living free.

Do you and others on the Committee own pets? Perhaps you have accidentally stepped on the animal's tail. Have you heard him/her scream in pain? Have you stepped away immediately and consoled the animal, feeling upset that it happened?

But what if the pet owner continued to apply weight, the animal screaming out in pain, struggling desperately to get away from the agony and the cruelty? That's similar to what trappers do. All manner of species of animals wind up in traps— weasels, foxes, eagles, wolves, dogs, the list goes on and one—screaming in agony, enduring horrible pain until they die.

There are hardly any stipulations on trappers to do anything to lessen the agony suffered by these animals—no trapping educational requirements, no mandatory time checks on traps. And to whose benefit? Well, the trapper can sell the furs. And those people with more money than morals can show off—"Look, World, I can afford to wear a dead animal on my body!"

Trapping contributes hardly anything to Montana's economy. The trapper makes a few bucks selling the furs; but the economic return to the State's economy is minimal. The vast majority of State citizens are not trappers and do not support trapping. Trappers, however, are allowed to indiscriminately kill wildlife for their personal gain without paying the full and true price for the damage they do to wildlife populations. It is welfare for trappers, who likely eschew the very idea of welfare under any other circumstances.

The following quote is from Job, Chapter 12. "But ask now the beasts and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the **soul of every living thing** and the breath of all mankind."

I'm no Biblical scholar; but it sounds like man and beast have in commonality—among other things—a soul.

Roger Holtum

Dear Sirs;

I am a Montana native and taxpayer and I concur with the following recommendations recommended by Footloose Montana. I urge the FWP commission to adopt the following into your 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 daily 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, with testing.

**Thank you,
Steven Clevidence
Stevensville, Mt. 59870**

Please consider my input as you consider reforms to trapping in the state of Montana. I worked hard to help get the 35,000 signatures to place a trapping ban on the ballot in 2016, and I found many Montanans who were committed on the issue and were eager to sign to register their support for trapping restrictions. Actually I witnessed men who physically prevented the women in their company from signing the petition, threatening them and holding their wrist. I also spent many hours in past years meeting with trappers at coffee shops to understand their interests. They indicated several times that they would accept certain limits on trapping, but said they would not admit to it in public. They know that there are improvements that can be made to make trapping more ethical. As a result of this work, I recommended to the Commission that setbacks be adjusted at trailheads from 50 feet to 300 feet. The Commission under Dan Vermillion did accept that recommendation and in fact increased the setbacks to 500 feet. There were nine other recommendations we made at that time, and we were disappointed that those were ignored, since they were carefully developed based on our meetings with trappers themselves.

I recall an avid hunter friend of mine commenting that "trapping is the lazy hunter's way" of taking animals. I think that a ban is appropriate, but that restrictions are good in the meantime. The reason I believe a ban is a good idea has nothing to do with limiting the traditional activities practiced, but is entirely based on the realities of climate change and its impacts on wildlife populations. For example,

anecdotally, I have never seen a bobcat in 20 years in Montana (have seen them in other states). More importantly we need beavers to be re-established on the land to promote healthy waterways. There is a trophic cascade element to beavers in that many other wildlife species (including moose which are declining, and even man!) will benefit to slowing down snowmelt as we encounter continued record-breaking precipitation variances from historical norms. The flooding across the United States is proof of that.

To the end of limiting the harmful effects of taking wildlife via indiscriminate trapping, I support all of the recommendations of the Footloose Montana partners, such as requiring trappers to have mandatory education and licensing; raising the price of a trapping license significantly, banning trapping in certain areas in every county in Montana, especially those with species of concern, outlawing trapping of beaver, 24-hour trap check requirements and greater signage. As I have commented, I believe an outright ban of trapping on public lands is the appropriate move to make, as they have done in Arizona and other states. We just are not living in the "good old days" when wanton destruction of wildlife seemed alright since there was a seemingly endless supply. I believe that many sports hunters would approve of restrictions on trapping, which not only results in "bycatch" such as deer and bears being injured and debilitated, but also results in the public outrage over death and injury to pets.

I hope you will consider these comments. Please contact me if you want to. I would appear in Helena to make these comments in person if it were valuable.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ostlie
Bozeman, MT

Dear Mr. Vore,

If you can only imagine the painful trauma an animal goes through caught in a trap, they might as well be dead. The whole crazy concept of trapping has to be consigned to history. If not, the indiscriminate laying of traps, which pose a danger to us all, must stop. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Robert Zingmark

Dear Mr. Vore,

I am reaching out to you today to share my concerns and ideas related to trapping in Montana. I know that there is a Trapping Advisory Committee meeting coming up the beginning of April so I would like to share my thoughts with you and hope you would take some of these ideas into consideration.

I am very fond of our beautiful state, it's like no other and the outdoors, the natural resources and wildlife are unique, something we should be proud of, keep safe and protect.

I am familiar with a lot of the trapping practices in our state and believe that changes would benefit our state and citizens who love to explore the outdoors. We need to better ensure the safety of our furry family members that we often take for hikes and nature walks, as well as minimize the non-selective wildlife trapping and killing of rare Montana species that make our state very special.

My family and I love exploring the outdoors with our 3 dogs as most people, and I think it would be a good idea for their safety to look into placing signs that let people know if there are any traps set up in the area, especially by hiking trails. I also think it would be great if there are specific areas that should be designated as trap free. Throughout the year we hear of a number of unfortunate cases of dogs getting trapped accidentally and dying. This is scary and unimaginable. There should be some kind of compensation for these people whose pets get injured or die by getting trapped. This is a traumatic experience and the vet bills are enormous.

Trapping is not the most selective or humane way of targeting wildlife so there should be mandatory education and daily trap checks established. Also we should restrict trapping from endangered species' habitat.

I hope that you would discuss these ideas in your next committee meeting and take them into consideration.

Best Regards,
Meglena

I have had two dogs caught in traps! One right outside my back gate where somebody in my neighborhood decided muskrats in our neighborhood pond were theirs to trap!!! I was astounded to find out it was legal!!! I am 77 and it was really hard to get the trap off my dogs foot and I knew nothing about traps and had to pry it off...traps are horrible. When my dog was trapped I was shocked to see the muskrat drowned next to him! How can you or ANYONE in Montana justify this??? Its time for Montana to END TRAPPING!!!

CJ ROLPHE
Kalispell, Mt

Attention Trapping Advisory Committee:

Safety issue. Trap set back from roads and trails should be 500'
Require signage at trailheads where traps are set.
Require daily trap-limit-checks
Require mandatory reporting of all animals caught
Require all Trappers to be licensed and regulated.
Every county should have several trap-free areas
Raise the price of a trapping license
Ban recreational trapping in endangered species habitat.
Stop trapping of beaver to combat climate change.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues.
Suzanna McDougal
Hamilton, MT

Gentlemen,
I am forwarding this to you because it says what we need
in Montana. We love our wildlife and consider trapping barbaric
and it causes horrible suffering. We are all better than this.
It has to happen. The future has arrived.
Thank you
Sheryl Noethe

Final Trapping Advisory Committee meeting coming right up!
April 2-3, FWP Wild Outdoor Educational Center
2668 Broadwater Ave., Helena, MT

Committee members decided to have one more meeting. This is the last chance to let the TAC know your ideas for **trapping reform**. Public comment is heard 12-1pm both days. **Testimony in person is powerful**, but if you can't be there, **please send your comments to the committee** c/o John Vore ~ jvore@mt.gov and to the Fish and Game Commission, fwpcomm@mt.gov.

The committee needs to know Montanans care deeply about the dangers to people and wildlife caused by indiscriminate recreational trapping. THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR STAKE IN THIS!

Hot Button Issues—What is most important to you?

- 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 daily 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, with testing.

Thanks for your efforts—They count!

Your friends at Footloose Montana

I am unable to attend the Trapping Advisory Committee meeting next week but wanted to share my thoughts on trapping reform. I care deeply about the dangers to people and wildlife caused by indiscriminate recreational trapping.

First of all, I would like to see a requirement for 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. This is a logical step towards a better understanding of wildlife populations and how trapping impacts them.

Secondly, I think it is necessary to require all trappers to be licensed and regulated as well as pass a mandatory trapping education class. This would bring trapping more in-line with hunting regulations in our state -- something that seems very logical.

Thirdly, Montana should institute a daily trap-limit check; 48-hrs under special circumstances (i.e. illness). A trapper caught not checking traps within the time limit would face loss of license for a period of time.

Finally, it is important to me that trappers be held financially responsible for vet bills if a pet is trapped. I also think it makes a lot of sense to designate several trap-free areas in every Montana county so that people who want to hike with dogs worry-free can do so.

Thanks very much for considering my thoughts,

Dylan Flather
Hamilton, MT

Hello,

Here is what I think about trapping in the state of Montana:

IT SHOULD BE OUTLAWED BECAUSE IT IS CRUEL, UNNECESSARY AND RISKY TO OTHER CREATURES, including children and domestic pets. But because our legislators and ill-informed voters continue to fight for the right to trap (WHY?!?! WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A VERY VERY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE IN THIS STATE), here are my additional thoughts:

- 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 daily 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.
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- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.
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- Mandatory education for all trappers must be in person, with testing.

PLEASE VOTE WITH COMPASSION AND REASON.

Sincerely,

Susan Waters
Missoula, MT

Thank you for continuing to hold public comment meeting for the Trapping Advisory Committee. I am unable to attend but wanted to say I am strongly in favor of increased trapping regulation. I believe distances from trails and roads should be increased, daily checks should be mandatory, and licensing should be rigorous.

Thank you very much for you time and consideration.

-Anastasia Orkwiszewski, Missoula

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

Please ensure that my comments are passed on to the members of the committee.

It is my intention to discuss trapping in terms of safety, commerce, environment, society, religion.

In summary, I would prefer it if there were no harmful trapping at all. Realizing that Montanan's are not yet ready for this, there should at least be stringent rules around trapping to protect the rights of the general public, the tourism industry, people's pets, and to cause the least amount of suffering to the trapped animals. It is reasonable to expect that if trappers do not obey the rules set down by the law, that there would be some kind of penalty.

There are valid reasons for humane trapping. Relocation, tagging, stock protection. There are no reasons for inhumane trapping that stand up to logical thought, and consider the rights, safety and desire of the majority of people over a noisy minority.

If not banned altogether, inhumane traps should be heavily regulated, to protect the rights of the majority of taxpayers.

- All trappers should be licensed.
- All trapped creatures should be reported.
- Education should be mandatory.
- Traps should be set well back from any area likely to have recreational activities nearby (at least ¼ of a mile seems reasonable)
- All traps should be checked within reasonable timeframes; every 24 hours would be ideal, but some limit should be applied.
- Trappers not obeying these regulations should be penalized with a loss of licence and a meaningful fine.

In the following I am discussing only "inhumane" traps; traps that harm or kill the animal – either immediately, or death by starvation, thirst or exposure if the traps are left unchecked.

Commerce.

It is estimated that in 2017 Montana's 12.2 million non-resident visitors spent \$3.29 billion in the state.

Visitors are engaged in a huge amount of outdoor activities, including hiking, swimming, biking, skiing, hunting and many others. These tourist activities are endangered by inhumane traps. Especially those that are within, say half a mile of any recreational activities.

Trapping economically advantages a very small portion of Montana's economy. In fact, for almost all trappers, trapping is merely a hobby, allowing people to cover their costs and perhaps have a little left over.

From an economic standpoint, for Montana, for the vast majority of taxpayers, trapping does not make sense.

Safety.

By their nature, inhumane traps are unsafe. They are hidden, they cause varying degrees of harm to the trapped creature.

Traps are indiscriminate. They trap whatever steps into them. It could be a person, a dog, a deer, an elk, or an entirely unlooked for animal that is caught, maimed and perhaps killed.

For the right of the general community and the 12,000,000 visitors to Montana to be safe, for the prosperity of the tourism industry, inhumane trapping should ideally be banned, but at the very least heavily regulated, by law, and only conducted well away from the general population.

Society.

Trapping has been going on in Montana for a long time.

People feel very strongly about their rights, especially when it is to continue an hereditary activity (an example is the ability of some cultures to continue to kill whales, despite a general worldwide ban).

While we must respect the rights and feelings of this minority, there is a time when society must look to the rights of the majority and grow, and not carry on inhumane activities. A mere 154 years ago, slavery was allowed in America, and the slave owners felt just as strongly about their inherited rights.

It is generally accepted social behaviour that we must not treat our pets cruelly. Pets are merely animals that we have formed an emotional attachment to. There is nothing inherently special about the animals that we share our homes with. They are still animals; feeling the same pain, the same distress as those animals that are caught in traps. Indeed sometimes our pets are caught in these same, indiscriminate traps.

Sociologists will tell you that people who engage in cruelty to animals or other people, become hardened to those cruelties, lessened in empathy and are more likely to become more cruel, and cruel to more animals and to other people.

Inhumane trapping is cruel. On this aspect alone, that type of trapping should be banned.

Environment

Having wolves and other top level predators in our environment helps with the health of deer, elk and other native animal populations. This has been shown to be true over and over again.

Apart from the evidence provided by studies in Yellowstone, Alaska, and elsewhere, it is only logical. Trophy hunters take the most genetically superior animals – those whose health and intellect have allowed them to live the longest and have the largest racks. Wolves and other top predators take the weak, the sick and the old; strengthening the herd.

Studies have shown that having wolves and other top predators in an area restores herd health and increases native animal populations.

Traps are indiscriminate. They trap whatever steps into them. It could be a person, a dog, a deer, an elk, or an entirely unlooked for animal that is caught, maimed and perhaps killed by an inhumane trap.

Farming

It has happened, on rare occasions that wolves have slaughtered many farmed animals (sheep or goats) at one time, and left the bodies.

Wolves are closely related to dogs. They are not “evil” by nature, but do react to stimuli, just as our pet dogs do.

When a wolf hunts an animal in the wild, they choose one animal, track and kill it; the other animals have run away. In a circumstance where penned animals cannot escape a wolf attack, the wolves kill one animal, and lo and behold – the other animals have not run away! Reacting to the stimuli of the situation (just as a border collie does when they see movement (a car or a bicycle going by)) they kill again, and again. Want to farm in a gorgeous area where there are wild animals? Perhaps put in dog proof fencing to properly protect your penned animals.

It has been shown, that a wild wolf pack, even born and raised next to a field of cattle, do not attack the cattle. Cattle are not the normal, programmed food for a wolf. When however, man intervenes and say, kills the pack leaders, leaving the young, inexperienced wolves to hunt, they then attack the easy prey of cattle, not realizing the consequences and danger associated with hunting man’s livelihood.

Being a Christian.

Some Christians take the teachings that man has dominion over animals to mean that man can do as he likes with animals. In fact, this is a narrow and self-serving view. Not at all Christian.

The Lord our God urges us to look after animals in many quotes, only two of which are:

- o “Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast” (Prov 12:20) and
- o “And the angel of the LORD said to him, “Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to oppose you because your way is perverse before me.” (Num 22:32)

Read your bible and you will see that the Lord our God is a humane and loving God and that cruelty to animals and causing undue suffering is hateful to Him.

Summary

In summary, there are a relatively small number of people who feel passionately that they should be allowed to trap. There is an equally small (but growing) number of people who feel passionately that all trapping should be banned.

The job of the government and it’s associated advisors is to protect the rights, the safety and the prosperity of the majority of the population. By this logic, it has been shown that trapping is not

- Carried on by the majority of the population
- economically comparable to the tourism industry

- an economical imperative for the majority of trappers

Trapping does not

- Protect the rights of the majority of taxpayers by allowing them and their pets a safe recreational environment

Ideally inhumane trapping should be banned, but at the very least, it should be heavily regulated for the right of the general community to feel safe, and for the economic benefit of Montana.

Thank you for your consideration.

Scharyn Way
Victor, Montana.

From: Tom Meine
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2019 9:44 AM
To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>
Subject: Mandatory Trap Check

Sent from my iPhone Attn:John Vore We as ethical trappers have enough regulations and do not need any more. A mandatory trap check puts trappers at risk due to unforeseen surcomstances such as weather,family emergencies mechanical issues etc. This is just another attempt be the anti trappers to take away our rights as trappers. If anything we need a bill to stop anymore laws against trapping,Thank You.

From: Cliff Simonsen
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2019 10:54 AM
To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>
Subject: Re: Trappers Advisory Committee 4/2-3/19

ATTN JOHN OVER

We do not need a mandatory trap check regulation, the regulation we have now work just fine. Do not change them!!!

THANKS

CLIFF SIMONSEN

On 3/29/2019 9:01 AM, Jeff Rader wrote:

And if you're not able to attend the TAC5 meeting in Helena on April 2nd and 3rd, please drop a quick note, ATTN: JOHN VORE, to:

fwpgen@mt.gov

Explain to Mr. Vore why a mandatory trap check regulation is unworkable in Montana.

Please do this as the anti's are writing in like crazy to the FWP on this issue. Let's not let Vore think that they outnumber us or that they care about this issue more than we do.

Thank you again!

Jeff Rader
Bozeman, MT

From: David Hastings
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2019 11:20 AM
To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>
Subject: ATTN: John Vore

Mandatory trap check in MT...a bad idea.

Regulations created to avoid political or legal pushback are poor regulations.

The current state in MT with the recommended 48 hour check already provides the necessary humane address of issues.

I am certain you are aware of the particulars on both sides of the debate, so I will not address those.

What may not be acknowledged is that a group of motivated people who feel they have the "high moral ground" should not be empowered to regulate those who do not agree; this flies in the face of our democratic republic; and was one of the chief concerns of founding fathers like Adams and Jefferson.

A majority can be the worst of tyrants...and in this particular case, based on the recent ballot initiatives, the majority already voiced its opposition to such regulation.

So we have a vocal, manipulative minority forcing its will on the majority in Montana.

Sincerely,
Dave Hastings, President
Fur Takers of America

From: Art Perleberg
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2019 12:00 PM
To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>
Subject: Attn Mr Vore

Please do not think we need a mandatory trap check. I run a snare line in SE Montana to control coyotes. With a mandatory trap check, I would be done - period. I can't handle 300 miles every day. The consequence will be a decrease in deer and antelope licenses for Region 7. We rank with highest numbers and best hunter success rates for deer and antelope in the state. One of the main reason is my friends and I take over 300 coyotes a year out of Powder River County alone. Plus we have no grizzly bears and no wolves to speak of. Your fellow hunters from Western Montana have figured this out and come in droves during hunting season to SE Montana. So if you want to keep that population of ungulates strong here in SE Montana I suggest you don't mess with a mandatory trap check. I trap and snare coyotes mainly to help area ranchers with predation problems. They don't want me to stop my

coyote control because of a mandatory trap check - but I will. That is just what the antis want - to get a foothold and then ask for more. Do the right thing and leave the trap check alone. Art Perleberg Broadus Montana

From: Garrett Bacon
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2019 2:15 PM
To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>
Subject: No to Mandatory trap check

John, please do not push for a mandatory trap check. It is impossible to do with our weather conditions and geography. All trappers would be in violation involuntarily.

Hello,

I wanted to pass along my concerns while the topic of trapping reform is on the docket. I personally think that trapping is an outdated, cruel and unnecessary form of hunting. Too many people are out and about on public lands these days to justify allowing traps to be set. I know that outlawing trapping is not what is up for discussion right now, but anything that requires more accountability with trappers is very important. More signage at trailheads, more regulation of trappers IE proper licensing and registration, requiring trap checking with consequences for violation, designating trap free areas, compensation for pet victim's owners, suspension of Beaver trapping and the complete ban of recreational trapping in endangered species habitat (which is shockingly not already illegal). Hunters are required to take hunter safety and are licensed and regulated, and hunters are there in person to make judgment calls about safety whereas trappers don't even have to be present. They should be more heavily regulated than hunting. Please consider moving Montana forward- away from traps and toward a safer future.

Sincerely,

Angi Hronek
Stevensville, MT

From: Weston Devers >
Sent: Sunday, March 31, 2019 7:37 PM
To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>
Subject: Attn: John Vore

Dear Mr. Vore,

A mandatory trap check is not in the best interest of the Montana trapper. This will put a strain on their day to day jobs. It will also cause them to use more fuel and produce more emissions hurting our environment. Also doing a mandatory daily trap check will cause hard ship on the other animals that live around the trap line.

We Montanans need you to oppose the daily mandatory trap check. It will not help the animals or the trappers.

Thank you for your time,

From: Kirk Hash
Sent: Sunday, March 31, 2019 3:04 PM
To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>
Subject: Attn: John Vore

Dear Honorable Vore,

I am writing in regards to the upcoming decision on a Mandatory Trap Check.

I am opposed to a mandatory trap check and here are some reasons why I feel this way:

- 1) I believe this is not base on science but on emotions that want to regulate an already regulated sport that its end objective is to eliminate trapping in the State of Montana.
- 2) The trapping of martens, fishers and other species in the higher elevations are an extreme hardship to the trapper. If this mandatory trap check is approved that hardship will be increase dramatically due to the extra cost of fuel and increased risks for the trapper.
- 3) The trapping of predators, such as, coyotes, bobcats and wolves would make capture of these species extremely difficult. That is, predator species require the trap to remain undisturbed for at least a couple of days due to their suspicious nature. The trapping of wolves is even more pronounced because of their movements to be able to travel huge distances. Wolf trapping is relativity new to the State of Montana. If mandatory trap check is implemented the control of wolves would be attenuated and their numbers would grow, so the only chance for control would be the government.
- 4) The government agency that would probably do this is U.S. Department of Agriculture, A.P.H.I.S., Wildlife Services, formally Animal Damage Control, or ADC. I worked for ADC in the 1980's. Their practices are far from what the current State of Montana's Fish, Wildlife & Parks are regarding trap checking. Because of their vast areas to cover a captured animal in a trap could be in for a day or over a week. The ADC agents relied on mother nature to take care of the problem, that is, the hot sun would stress the animal that it would die in the trap. This is not a problem for the trapper because they can still report the kill. The killing of livestock usually occurs during Spring and Fall. So the traps are placed and mother nature does the rest. Sometimes ADC uses fix wing or helicopters to fly over and shoot the predators. This works, however, the cost of flying is very expensive and the taxpayer will pay the bill. I think it would be better for the Montana Trapper to try their luck to harvest these animals that would not put the burden for payment on the taxpayer.
- 5) The majority of Montana Trappers are hobby trappers. They usually work full time jobs and check their traps in the evening and on weekends. They make some extra money but by paying

for fuel costs and other expenditures they make very little money. They use this money for their family. Regardless of this they continue to head to Montana's back country and try the luck on harvesting a Montana furbearer or predator animal.

6) The persons who want to end trapping in the State of Montana believe that a trap set will always catch the intended animal. This is not always the case. There have been times when traps have gone undisturbed for an entire season. This sport of trapping is not a 100% endeavor. It is however a difficult sport that a few hardworking people do get a chance to harvest an animal. Trapping requires a unique set of skills that usually takes years to learn. If this bill passes then the younger generation of trappers will probably never get the chance to become a Montana Trapper.

Please pass this e-mail to your fellow committee members to share what I have written to you. I want to thank you for your time.

Yours in trapping,
Kirk Robert Hash, Sr.

Dear sir,

I am asking you to oppose a mandatory trap check based on a time interval for the following reasons. Forcing a trap check in extreme weather would put people who trap, FWP enforcement personnel and inevitably search and rescue personnel at unnecessary risk. I am a reliable employee and have held my job for 14 years. I can't make it to work on time 100% of the time, I can't make it to work 100% of the time. Things happen beyond my control. A forced time interval trap check would make it a crime for a trapper to be late for work which would eventually make every trapper a criminal at some point for no fault of their own. When trapping private land the land owner often has good reason to say when access through fields and livestock is okay and not okay. Enforcement of a trap check would be untenable for FWP and would have the potential to violate private property rights. Traps are often checked by sight and often great distance with binoculars and there would be no certain way for FWP to tell if the trap was checked or not. The recommended 48 hour trap check is working and it is already a misdemeanor to waste a furbearer in Montana.

Respectfully,
Michael Laird
Dillon, MT

From: Kenneth Cordoza
Sent: Saturday, March 30, 2019 10:09 AM
To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>
Subject: FW: HB517/Upcoming TAC Meeting

Good morning Mr. Vore: I would like you to know I am opposed to a change in trap check times. It is very difficult to check traps on a 24 hour basis due to weather and many other problems that can occur in the outdoors. Also we would lose the ability to trap predators on our ranch due to less time to set traps. Thank you, Ken Cordoza, Whitefish. Ken

From: Tom Jackson
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2019 10:34 PM
To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>
Subject: attn: John Vore / mandatory trap check

A mandatory trap check is not feasible or practical for Montana trappers due to the distances traveled, weather and many other reasons. Thanks for your time, Tom Jackson

As a trapper and rancher living in the blackfoot valley I understand how a mandatory trap check will hinder the take of predators in the blackfoot valley. Currently wolf densities in the blackfoot valley are twice as dense as Yellowstone park. We need more liberal take rules for wolves not more restrictive. The anti trapper make lots of claims most of which are based on myths. Traps do not cut deep into the flesh of the animal because trapper file all trap edges. Animals that have evolved over centuries to live outdoors do not suffer while being held in a trap.

Montana wolf hunters and trappers need more liberal rule in order to help out the ranchers and livestock owners.

Thanks for your time.

Bob Rowland
Ovando

Mr. Vore I am writing you this email in relation to the upcoming TAC meeting. I will not be able to attend due to work constraints but I wanted to write you and express my thoughts.

1. Why are you continuing to push a mandatory trap check law so hard? What is your agenda? It cannot be inline with what the majority of the citizens of Montana support, or our state legislators because the citizens of this state spoke when they voted down I-177 in a landslide, and our state representatives just killed a trap check bill in committee just a short time ago.
2. Trappers and Sportsmen are not going to just sit idly by and watch as the activities we love are slowly eroded by a very small group of misinformed animal rights activists. We will fight these misguided individuals by every legal avenue every step of the way.
3. The position of fwp and the state of Montana should be consistent with the will of the majority of citizens and it's elected representatives. What this position should be has been clearly demonstrated during the last few years.

Please do not support a mandatory trap check. It is not needed and will be just another law that is almost impossible to enforce. FWP wardens have spoken against it saying that the wanton waste law is appropriate and a trap check law is unnecessary and unenforceable.

Sincerely
Lewis Tafelmeyer
Helena MT

Dear Mr. John Vore,

A mandatory trap check is very unworkable in the state of Montana. The current regulation is working. There is no need to change it. Do not let the anti-trappers suck you in to their bleeding heart nonsense Mr. Vore.

Sincerely,

Austin Boutillier

From: Margarita McLarty
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2019 9:43 AM
To: Vore, John <jvore@mt.gov>
Cc: fwpcomm@mt.gov
Subject: Trapping Regulations in Montana

Regarding the upcoming committee vote on regulation of animal trapping in Montana:

Please consider the following policies that will enhance public safety and security.

- 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 daily 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.
- Raise the price of a trapping license (now \$20) substantially to be in line with the consumption of a precious resource.
- Ban recreational trapping in endangered species' habitat.

- Mandatory education for all trappers must be in person, with testing.

Thank you for your consideration,

Don & Margarita McLarty

Don & Margarita McLarty

From: James Arneson

Sent: Friday, March 29, 2019 9:13 AM

To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>

Subject: 24 hour trap check

This is a law that can not be passed. There are a lot of people who trap with their kids and with the kids being in school it would not allow our youth to be involved, to learn from their elders. To assure the tradition of trapping done the right way, the young trappers need to learn from people who have done it ethically for generations. FWP, landowners and predator control is needed in this great state. It is a way of life, a tradition and a big part of being outdoors for thousands in this great state.

I respectfully ask that you do not pass this. The youth of our state are our future and we owe it to them to share what our great state has to offer, hunting, trapping and fishing

Thank you,

James L. Arneson

March 31, 2019

Montana Trapping Advisory Committee Members,

In your efforts to make decisions on recommendations for trapping to the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission, we respectfully ask that you consider the following suggestions.

1. **Require that all trappers successfully complete a trapping education course** similar to hunter education and wolf trapping courses.
2. **Require that all traps be checked every 48 hours** to reduce negative effects of trapping on non-target animals. Forty-eight hour trap checks are currently carried out for all wolf and some bobcat traps. A 48-hour trap check interval should be a minimal standard for trapping.
3. **Require signage at trailheads** and similar recreation area entrances where trapping occurs. This is a modest step toward reducing conflict with the majority of people who use public lands.

4. **Require all trappers to be licensed.** Hunters must be licensed; trappers should follow similar regulations.
5. **Require all trappers to report all animals captured, released or killed** to increase knowledge of population data, injuries, and harm to non-target species including protected species, domestic animals and livestock.
6. **Require that predator and nongame trappers report trapped dogs** – as is currently required for those who trap wolves and furbearers. Increased reporting requirements are necessary to more accurately estimate the effects of trapping on dogs. The year-round trapping of coyotes can easily lure and capture non-target domestic canines.
7. **Increase setbacks for all traps, including water traps, to 500 feet from trails, roads and decommissioned roads** to significantly reduce conflict with other public land users.
8. CWD: Please consider a **moratorium on wolf trapping** during this critical time in order to stop the spread of CWD throughout the state. Chronic Wasting Disease is a growing threat to human health and safety, and to Montana’s hunting industry. Wolves are the best defense against the spread of CWD by culling sick elk and deer.
9. **Designate at least two no-trapping zones in every county** so hunters and recreationalists can safely access a small portion of their public lands.

The above are recommendations approved by the Board of Footloose Montana (which is not affiliated with K.C. York’s Trap Free Montana Public Lands). We thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

The Board of Footloose Montana

Connie Poten
Clare Beelman
Anja Heister
April Christofferson
Dave Stalling
Ford Johnson

From: Dave Wallace
Sent: Monday, April 1, 2019 12:43 PM
To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>
Subject: trap check

Mr. Vore,

A mandatory trap check law is just one step closer to abolishing trapping in this state as we know it! A recommended 24 hour trap check is working just fine and we don't need to fix what isn't broken or try to appease people's emotions. Thank you for your time,

Dave Wallace

Wallace Wildlife Services,L.L.C.

Kila, Mt.

From: John Lunetta

Sent: Monday, April 1, 2019 11:22 AM

To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>

Cc: Montana Trappers Association <info@montanatrappers.org>

Subject: Please, No Trap Check law!

Dear Mr. Vore,

Trapping plays a "Major Important Role" in the "Management of Montana Wildlife".

A Politically Motivated Trap Check Law, "Sublimely," sponsored by the Anti's, does-nothing more, then hinder / stop, the motivation of Montana Trapper's.

The "Management of Montana Wildlife" by current means of Lawful Controlled Trapping, are now provided to the our public, with "Tax Free Dollars".

The "Motivated Anti Trap Check Law," would also further burden Montana Law Enforcement Resources, that is already stressed with current man-power issues. Forever"!!!

Montana, similar to Alaska, is vast, vast, wilderness country, with serious unpredictable weather conditions.

"Trap Check Laws" are Completely Unpractical in the State of Montana.

Years and years of trapping history in Montana, has proven this completely to ourselves.

Why Now do we need a Trap Check Law?

Only to appease the Anti's, with their relentless efforts to Hinder, Convolute, Discourage, and continued intentional, step-process to Stop Trapping in Montana.

We need your support on this critical matter immediately,

Thank You, and Respectfully Submitted,

John Lunetta

