

2018 MONTANA TRAPPING ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHARTER  
Original Charter September 26, 2017 – revised May 2, 2018 to accommodate new dates

Hunting and trapping of managed species in Montana is highly regulated by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) so that population viability of those species is protected. Yet trapping in particular has been and remains controversial. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks will assemble a citizen committee representing the spectrum of opinions on trapping that will provide recommendations to FWP that ensure population viability of trapped species, the humane treatment of animals, and minimize social conflict.

FWP will put out a call for participation through newspapers, social media and on our website. Applications will be reviewed by FWP with the final selection by the Director of approximately 12 people who represent the geography of Montana, the spectrum of opinions on trapping, and who can respectfully work together to address issues and reach consensus. FWP wants people who are solution-oriented and respectful of diverse opinions, not people with an exclusive unilateral agenda. Committee members will be expected to participate in 3 – 4 meetings that will be professionally-facilitated by a non-FWP person over six to eight months, and present recommendations to FWP by March 30, 2019. FWP will not be a member of the committee, but will provide technical and information assistance.

The committee will not consider whether or not there will be trapping in Montana. Trapping is a legal activity, a sound wildlife management practice and a legitimate use of wildlife, and is well represented in Montana's history and culture. Through this collaborative effort, FWP looks to ensure trapping will continue. It is protected by the Montana Constitution's Article IX in the Preservation of Harvest Heritage Section 7. Also, in FWP's Vision and Guide for 2016-2026, the department states that it values "the continued importance of hunting, fishing, trapping, and other outdoor recreation to Montana's culture and conservation ethic."

Eighteen years ago, in 1999, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks' then director, Pat Graham, assembled a similar Trapping Advisory Committee to "Identify recommendations for the Director's consideration to minimize conflicts between land-use practices, outdoor recreation and trapping." That committee made nine recommendations to the Director, many of which have been implemented. At a minimum, this Trapping Advisory Committee will review the recommendations of the 1999 committee, including the controversial issue of trap check time, and will evaluate those recommendations as part of its charge. This effort will also provide opportunity for other trapping-related specifics to be discussed and reviewed.