


PUBLIC COMMENT

WOLF / OTHER SPECIES TRAPPING

Received by
Erik Wickman, Executive Office Manager
NOV 08 2024
Director's Office
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks



Wickman, Erik

From: rattpak@centurytel.net
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 8:32 AM
To: FWP Commission

Director and Commissioners,

Please stick with me. I know it is long, but it is important.

I have taught Hunter Education and Bowhunter Education for 30 years and while I realize that I will soon not be able to participate much longer, I am saddened that the department is not trying to save some of the ungulates so that our Youth may have a fraction of what I have enjoyed for so many years. Wolves have decimated the ungulate herds in Northwest Montana. The Department acknowledges that the area has too much cover to count how many elk, moose and deer are living there. But they make no allowance to the number of wolves hunters see that they use to base the wolf population. But, they will acknowledge that we have 500, or nearly half of the entire wolf population. Where I used to be able to bugle over a canyon where I would often get 2,3, or even more answers, now I can travel from ridge to ridge and never get an answer. And, if you do, they have learned that making noise attracts wolves and it is best to keep quiet.

One point of the proposed regulations that I think needs to be addressed is the trap size restriction if a Grizzly is caught early. Some of the best traps made today are 6 inch and are helpful in breaking through snow and frost. Many recreational trappers are using a 6" jaw spread for coyotes and it is wrong to make them pull their line in the unlikely event that a grizzly is caught. Catching one Grizzly would be extremely unlikely so the odds of a second one is even more unlikely and that is just not a good reason to penalize a large portion of the coyote trappers.

The Department is proposing an additional permit for non-game and predators. Is this to distinguish between recreational and professional trappers? Does it really matter if who catches a wolf? This makes no sense because the department has a list of everyone who buys a trapping license and there is a survey to be filled out at the end of the season. This is just one more opportunity to create paperwork that has no value. We have a meeting in the spring that we have always shared any information that the Biologists have requested and we are proud of working with the Biologists to make sure the regulations work for everyone. What purpose does it serve to require a trapper to run down each landowner that has asked him to trap predators. I can see some landowners wondering if this is a liability release for the trapper or the Department. Is this another challenge or hurdle to persuade the trapper to quit. We are already required to report non target captures. Why is this being revisited? Adding challenges to the trapper is not going to make the people who do their research on the Disney channel not ask for the same things. Conceding anything just gives them more room to ask for something else. Their goal is to make trapping too much effort and get some to hang it up.

Setbacks – Simplify the regulations with 50 foot setback on roads that are open for vehicular traffic. If the road is open, a 50 foot setback allows a person an opportunity to exercise their dog. Basing the setback on which animal is targeted is not being fair to the public because there will be traps 50 feet from the road. If the road is closed, there should be no setbacks. Why does it matter if the road was open 2 or 3 months ago? How is anyone supposed to know if it was or not? Not all gates have signage to let us know if it was supposed to be open. Does it matter if the dog is caught in a coyote trap or a wolf trap? If someone is not familiar with how a trap works, they will possibly need help to release their dog, and this is not a life threatening experience. Tags

are required on each trap and with a couple of phone calls can cure the problem. Despite the image some people paint, the traps do not rip off the legs of a dog and these are the same traps that were used to capture the wolves that were released here.

A few years ago, the Commission approved no setbacks, with a few exceptions, in Sanders County and has had no problems. Commissioner Burrow's amendment is a good step in the right direction. The department reviews the wolf regulations every year so there is no reason to not give it a try in more areas. Sanders County's success shows that the trappers are not setting traps where there are pedestrians walking their dogs and if they are, they are posting signage to alert everyone that there are traps in the area. It works, and we need to expand this to other areas. Mineral County is a prime example where this makes sense. The country is so steep that the wolves run the roads and cut across from one road to another. They can't smell any lure 150 feet from the road. If you cannot locate private property to trap on, you are wasting your time. My friends have trapped over 40 wolves in Mineral County and only 1 has come off Public land because of the restrictions in place. I am glad that Commissioner Burrows realizes that this will help the Department reach a livable population of wolves. The Department should be endorsing this idea. Who wrote the response to the Commissioner's amendment to oppose reducing setbacks? I am disappointed that the Department would ignore the requirement that the Legislature gave them to reduce the number of wolves.

Since we are restricted by a judge playing biologist, we should increase the hunting season. There is no reason to not have hunting open on private land for 365 days a year and only closed on public land for 6 weeks starting on the first of April to allow the pups to get large enough to leave the den. No one is going to mistake a Grizzly for a wolf when hunting. The legislature passed laws to reduce the wolf population, and the Department is trying to say a 4 wolf reduction is meeting that requirement and it is not.

It is past time to step up and start reducing the number of wolves. Wolves are tough to hunt or trap. If we are going to save our ungulate population, we need all the help we can get. Our Elk, Moose, and Deer are too important to ignore their plight.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I hope you can see your way to help save some of the ungulates for our Future Generations.

Larry Rattray

Proctor, Montana

Wickman, Erik

From: Janie Talalotu <janie.a.talalotu1@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 1:52 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wolves

Do Right by these animals, Clearly, U ARE NOT! What have you people become!!

Wickman, Erik

From: Robin Taylor <jeepegal4life@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 12:00 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wolves

Sent from my iPhones

Please consider no trap and stricter laws! No trophy hunting! Noah put these animals on the Ark to be saved, not tortured and murdered!

Wickman, Erik

From: melissastl <melissastl@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 1:24 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wolves

Stop this unethical unfair slaughter of our wolves, unregulated trapping, and consequence going over quota! 6 wolves have now been known killed in 313 and 316. Close both units!

BREAKING NEWS! Another collared Yellowstone wolf in Montana management unit 313, discovered shot and who later died from the injuries as the other 4 wolves were gunned down. This wolf tried to escape the mass shooting of the other 4 wolves killed in the pack! That puts the wolf quota allowance of 3 wolves for 313 to 5 wolves now known easily destroyed. 1 known wolf has been killed in 316. Were these wolves lured out of the park with bait? Were they habituated to simply look at people? Were they shot at night with night vision goggles on private land?

As a result, was another Yellowstone pack now wiped out due to ignorance, greed, and revenge?

According to FWP, no charges will be filed as all was within the regulations. Open fire.

Going over the quota in Montana is the norm, not the exception. That, too, carries no consequence.

Who's driving the bus, here, and look who's paying the price?

FWP Header

Dead wolf discovered in WMU 313

GARDINER – Last week, a mortality signal from a Yellowstone National Park collar led authorities to a wolf that appears to have died from a gunshot wound and was found in Wolf Management Unit (WMU) 313.

Evidence on site suggests the wolf was shot and had taken refuge in heavy cover. The carcass did not appear to have been tampered with or deliberately placed. Based upon the condition of the carcass, FWP believes this wolf was unknowingly wounded when the four other wolves harvested in WMU 313 were taken. In that circumstance, multiple hunters held multiple licenses and no wolves had previously been harvested within the WMU.

Hunters who knowingly wound animals they are pursuing are obligated to attempt to recover those animals. However, if recovery is impossible or hunters lose the trail, and the animal ultimately dies, there is no violation. Based upon the site visit and information gathered during the carcass inspection of the other wolves harvested in WMU 313, FWP is not investigating this circumstance as an illegal activity.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission established a quota of three wolves for WMU 313, which borders the northern boundary of Yellowstone National Park.

Wickman, Erik

From: Barb Godwin <bggplanet@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 9:17 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wolf Harvest in Montana WMU 313 and 316

Dear Gentlemen and Ladies of the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission:

Once again hunters in Montana's Units 313 and 316 have gunned down wolves in a mass shooting of which 5 wolves were of a Yellowstone pack.

Can it be possible that these wolves were lured out of the park on purpose as they are "easy kills" having been habituated to people that have only been observing them as wildlife within the park. As a result another Yellowstone pack has been wiped out due to greed and revenge or ignorance? This is slaughter not "sport".

The quota that you have set has now been exceeded and both units should now be closed to any type of wolf hunting or trapping for the rest of the 2024-2025 hunting season. Therefore any new kills should enact a hefty penalty for going over the quota. This should be in order to preserve any other wolves that might inadvertently venture from the safety of the National Park boundary.

As a recommendation, there should be no 24 hour "grace period". Maximum time for extraction and reporting should be at 12 hours and any hunter exceeding the quota should be heavily fined and have their hunting license revoked for the remainder of the current season.

It is imperative that we try to seek common ground on these hunting regulations for the 2025-2026 hunting season. Otherwise these conflicts will continue and the result will be a loss of tourist dollars that support a thriving industry year round. A far better investment than a few hunters and luxury sport killings for just a few months out of the year.

Respectfully,

Barb Godwin

Wickman, Erik

From: Robert Larson <rwlarson5405@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 6:51 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wolf Trapping regs

I don't feel Montana FWP commission should give in to activist Judges or animal rights so fast on the Grizzley bear. This is just their latest stunt to shut down trapping the fact of the mater is the biggest killer of grizzle is the Montana FWP and the US fish and game through putting them down for causing problem and will only get worse as they expand their territory. WHats next closing down a highway or dropping the speed limit down to 35. because grizzley do get killed while crossing. The anti trappers will not stop because you compromised.
Robert Larson Frenchtown MT

Wickman, Erik

From: Mike Freeman <mikefreeman0818@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 5:37 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wolf trapping regs

Please leave the wolf trapping regs the way they have been in the past. Quit catering to special interest groups that don't want people in the woods managing predators. So far there has not been any bears harmed in a wolf trap. Quit making up problems where problems don't exist. Use your science based system for managing predators instead of people's feelings. Thank you.

Mike Freeman
MT lifetime resident & taxpayer
Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: Lila Randolph-Poore <12lilamt@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 8:08 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wolf Trapping Proposals 2024-25

As a member of a bird hunting family, it is becoming increasingly clear to me that my rights and the safety of my bird hunting dogs is being jeopardized by the ever-expanding rights of trappers. It is wrong that trapper's rights would be considered more important than the rights of others to hunt and to recreate in a safe manner on public lands.

At the very least, there should be mandatory signage in areas where traps are set so the public can make informed decisions about whether to take the risk of recreating in trapping areas. Setbacks should be a minimum of 500 feet of all trails and roads and Ram Power Snares should Never be allowed. Snares are a deadly hazard to family pets, hunting dogs and wildlife that is unintentionally caught. To ensure the safety of children, family dogs, hunting dogs and wildlife, baiting and snaring should never be allowed on public lands. In addition, from a both a humane and population perspective , there should be mandatory 24-hour trap checks and mandatory reporting of intentional and incidental trappings.

Please consider the voices of all of the bird hunters and back country recreationists with pets when making decisions this year.

Lila Randolph-Poore
Red Lodge, Montana

Wickman, Erik

From: Craig Neal <craigneal70@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 8:36 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wolf trapping comment

Please expand wolf trapping in all areas to dec 1, through end of season for all areas,,

We have almost zero grizz conflict,, or incidental take of endangered species via trappers targeting wolves... Over reacting due to the theory that a perceived harm might happen has no place in wildlife management. Wolves are plentiful,, and even overabundant upon the landscape,, more liberal wolf management is necessary for the future,, in order to keep a healthy balance on the landscape.

Craig Neal

Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: Leon Helstad <vleonx44@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 7:56 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] wolf season

Sent from [Mail \[go.microsoft.com\]](mailto:go.microsoft.com) for Windows

The season has to return to December to march to keep the wolf population under control. The grizzly bear defense is total bull.

Wickman, Erik

From: Sonja Procive <sonjaprocive@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 5:09 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trap free Montana

Trapping animals is cruel and medieval!!! This has no space in our modern society and needs to be banned!

Trapping is inhumane and plain out animal cruelty.

- Sonja Procive

Wickman, Erik

From: Janie Talalotu <janie.a.talalotu1@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 1:31 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] The killing of 5 wolves outside of Yellowstone per Hunters.

I have just read the horrific killing of 5 wolves. What was done to these animals is Unethical, Unfair, an Unregulated Slaughter. 1 ran off injured but died thereafter from these hunters ON- SLOT. What is wrong with you FWP?? No charges accrued. You are to be working to PROTECT our WILDLIFE, NOT allowing senseless killing. Quit with the word, HARVEST! This is clearly NOT HARVESTING! IT'S OUT- RIGHT SLAUGHTER!! Call it What it really is. U are not there for the protection of wolves. Enough of this! Let's just decimate all Wolves for Hunters JOY!! AND FOR GOD'S SAKE, NO MORE SNOWMOBILES! WHO ARE YOU and WHAT HAVE YOU BECOME?? DO NOT DELIST THE GRIZZLIES, heaven knows how they too will be killed!! You allow horrific measures to be done to wolves and don't seem to care, what's to say these atrocities will too happen to OUR GRIZZLIES. REMEMBER, THESE ARE OUR WILDLIFE AS WELL! WE should have a say!! Do right by these wolves, YOU ARE SUPPOSE TO BE THERE VOICES! YOU ALL ARE FAILING! AS ARE ALL 3 GOVERNORS IN WYOMING/ IDAHO and OUR UNETHICAL HUNTER HIMSELF, GIAFONTE from our STATE OF MONTANA! JANIE TALALOTU, FLORENCE, MT. PLEASE RESPOND and LISTEN TO ME! I AM THE WOLVES VOICE! AGAIN, ARE YOU??

Wickman, Erik

From: Michelle Weyler <hollyfern3689@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 11:25 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] The Continued Slaughter of OUR Wolves

Dear Commission:

Is this really who we've become? Where has our compassion for life other than our own gone? Undoubtedly, what we sow, so shall we reap. Has that no significance? Has such heartless barbaric behavior become our way of existence? Controlled by evil passions?

This is not a threat. This is a fact, laugh as you may.. Those who have allowed and those who have joyously participated in these ongoing slaughters of our wolves will answer to Our Creator. What will your answer be? As I expressed.. What you sow, so shall you reap.

Please be responsible stewards of our wildlife. Stop the war on our wildlife!! Stop the unethical, inhumane killing of OUR wolves.

"BREAKING NEWS! Another collared Yellowstone wolf in Montana management unit 313, discovered shot and who later died from the injuries as the other 4 wolves were gunned down. This wolf tried to escape the mass shooting of the other 4 wolves killed in the pack! That puts the wolf quota allowance of 3 wolves for 313 to 5 wolves now known easily destroyed. 1 known wolf has been killed in 316. Were these wolves lured out of the park with bait? Were they habituated to simply look at people? Were they shot at night with night vision goggles on private land?

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Hunters who knowingly wound animals they are pursuing are obligated to attempt to recover those animals. However, if recovery is impossible or hunters lose the trail, and the animal ultimately dies, there is no violation. Based upon the site visit and information gathered during the carcass inspection of the other wolves harvested in WMU 313, FWP is not investigating this circumstance as an illegal activity."

Good luck in the afterlife
Michelle Weyler

Wickman, Erik

From: kirstie marcel <krferrin@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 6:37 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] the amendment by Commissioner Burrows.

Something that has been brought to my attention has me quite worried. I like getting out and exploring the trails as well as the public roads closed to motor vehicles in the Bitterroot valley with my two labrador retrievers and I rely on the fact that trappers are not supposed to have traps closer than 50ft from roads. The amendment by Commissioner Burrows would infringe on the ability to enjoy public land and would put pets, people and non-target wildlife at risk. Please strike the amendment.

I understand that trapping is a way of life, but I simply do not think that there are enough regulations. Why not increase setbacks to 500ft in high use areas in Ravalli County including the four exceptions to this amendment. Why not have mandatory trap signage to warn public land users that there will be traps in the area. Why not have a mandatory 24 hour trap check to ensure that animals aren't needlessly suffering. And how about reporting of intentional and incidental trappings and snarings. Again, I'm not saying that everyone needs to stop trapping, I just think that more regulations to keep people, pets and wildlife safe is absolutely necessary and the amendment by Commissioner Burrows would do the opposite of that.

Thank you for your time,
Kirstie

Wickman, Erik

From: PAUL ROSSIGNOL <fshnwalli@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 7:55 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping regulations

Dear Commissioners

Please do not bend to pressure from judges and activists to change trapping regulations. Coyotes have always been trapped as predators there is no biological reason to add any restrictions or regulations. Even if a bear gets pinched by a trap he will pull out 99.9% of the time with no injuries. If a trapper holds one that will be a bonus to FWP to be able to collar the bear if desired. You give a little now it will only prompt more lawsuits.

Thanks Paul Rossignol

Lolo Mt.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Wickman, Erik

From: austin keiper <swoopster102@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 4:33 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping comments

If we allow this to go through and the enviros to win the predator population will only continue to increase and put more burden on our already suffering ungulate population.

Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: Trap Free Montana <info@trapfreemt.org>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 4:35 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment re Wolf Trapping and Other Species 2024-2025
Attachments: 2024 Wolf Trapping public comment.pdf

Dear Chair Robinson and Commission,

Please find attached our public comment letter on the proposed wolf trapping and other species regulations for the 2024-2025 season

Thank you,
KC

KC York
President/Founder
Trap Free Montana



PO Box 335
Hamilton, Montana 59840
406-218-1170

www.trapfreemt.org [trapfreemt.org]

Trap Free Montana is a boots on the ground, 501(c)(3), connecting hearts and minds through science, truths in trapping, & compassion for wildlife, biodiversity, coexistence, & responsible stewardship. Our affiliate, Trap Free Montana Public Lands, (TFMPL), a 501(c)(4), focus is on trapping reform, trap free public lands, and related legislative actions.

Wickman, Erik

From: Kari I Gunderson <cnd2543@blackfoot.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 2:05 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment on wolf trapping 2024-2025 season proposals

Dear Commissioners,

I am a third generation Montanan growing up in rural Montana. I have lived in the Swan Valley for 46 years. I offer comments on the wolf trapping 2024-2025 season proposals. By submitting written comments, I can be guaranteed that my voice will be heard, not cut off due to lack of time at the November 12 meeting.

I oppose unregulated trapping that threatens grizzly bears before they den in the fall and in the spring when they emerge from hibernation. Scientifically valid evidence shows that climate change has caused grizzly bears to den later in the fall and emerge earlier in the spring than in past decades. Wolf trapping dates should be enforced from January 1-February 15. In addition, trapping should be closed when grizzlies wherever they have not denned, or have emerged earlier than February 15.

There also needs to be consequences when quotas are exceeded and because of that, 316 should be closed immediately. Exceeding quotas has consistently been ignored by MDFWP and wolfers take advantage of that loophole. The wolf killing quota has been met so it is your duty to close it according to quotas that you set.

There should be a requirement for supplemental trapping permits for all trappers targeting nongame or predatory animals in addition to holding a valid trapping license. There should be a requirement for signed affidavits detailing their activities and permission for trappers engaged in protecting livestock. In addition, signatures of ranchers and/or livestock producers should be required who employ trappers.

I am also opposed to the removal of trap set backs in Region 2. Recreationists and their domestic dogs are unnecessarily put in harm's way and these set backs prevent painful injuries or deaths of domestic dogs. This makes the work you do as Commissioners highly unpopular and suspect. Since many of the commissioners work in the commercial outfitting industry, they benefit from high wolf killing quotas, especially around Yellowstone NP and commercial outfitting in Region 1, particularly in the Swan Valley on state and federally managed public lands.

There should be mandatory 24-hour trap checks, trapping signage, mandatory reporting of intentional and incidental trappings/snarings, prohibiting the use of bait, prohibiting ram power snares, and where Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is present, which has recently been found in the Flathead County in Region 1, there should be an adjustment for the current and next seasons quotas. The minimum trap setbacks should be 150 feet on all public roads and 500 feet required for wolf trap sets. I will be working with state legislators to codify these considerations into law that MDFWP will be mandated to regulate and enforce.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kari Gunderson, PhD. Swan Valley, MT

Wickman, Erik

From: Tristen Harrison <tristen_abc@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 7:09 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment about wolf trapping

To whom it may concern,

I do not agree with the upcoming proposal as trappers are very specific about how they trap and where they set traps. I believe in all history there has only been 1 grizzly trapped, more grizzlies have been shot by hunters, hikers, fisherman, killed by cars and trains. We trap for ranchers and if these changes go into effect we can no longer trap for them which means they will go back to losing 70+ lambs a year. I also do not agree with another permit as we already have their permission. Ranchers and trappers are very busy everyday with little pay to protect their livestock. They do not need another task to add on. I hope you look at the trappers and ranchers perspectives on these items. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Tristen and Josh Jurek

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Wickman, Erik

From: Patra Chakshuvej <cpatra7@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 8:50 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please Protect Wolves - Stop Unregulated Trapping and Relentless Slaughter

To Whom It May Concern:

I just learned that a collared Yellowstone wolf in Montana management unit 313 was shot and killed along with the other 4 wolves who were gunned down. This is totally unacceptable. 5 wolves for 313 have been killed, over the wolf quota allowance of 3 wolves. Please work to stop this unethical slaughter of our wolves - this is totally disgusting behavior. These people are not hunting for food; they just enjoy trapping and killing helpless animals.

Seeing a wolf in the Lamar Valley was one of the highlights of visiting Yellowstone last year. It is sad to learn that such special wildlife encounters will become increasingly rare, taking away the joy and wonder of millions of Yellowstone visitors as wolves are randomly slaughtered for hunter enjoyment.

Thank you for your kind attention,
Patra

Wickman, Erik

From: cassandra rideg <9milefarmandmerc@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 6:39 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MT FWP Commission Meeting - 11/12/2024
Attachments: 20241101_100649.jpg; 20241101_163038.jpg; 20241101_162857.jpg

**FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION MEETING
NOVEMBER 12, 2024**

Hello, I am Cassandra Rideg from Huson, Montana, in Region II. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. My entire family supports Montana FWP. We have a ranch with livestock. We have had every type of wildlife come through our place. We enjoy them all. However, we are seeing fewer and fewer of all species. We hunt and fish only for food. So, we don't condone trophy hunting and trapping. However, if this happens in Montana, I implore you to do this ethically, responsibly, and sustainably, which is not happening now. By Montana's hunting/trapping standards, you could hardly tell there is a species diversity crisis!!! Going at the rate we are going, all the megafauna will be gone by twenty-thirty!

I ask you to adjust wolf and carnivore trapping to benefit both consumptive and nonconsumptive Montanans. Wolves and other wildlife have tremendous value to all of us and the ecosystem they support.

First, there is no reason to manage wolves that do not depredate on livestock. One management option is to avoid managing. Interspecific pack conflict prevents the overpopulation of wolves. An excellent example of this is Yellowstone. The wolf population there hovers around 100 animals per year on average. That aside, if hunters and trappers do so for fur, have the season start November 1st when pelts at least have value. Before this time, there would be no purpose in hunting them; the carcass would be wasted, such as the fifth-collared Yellowstone wolf, who was gut-shot in W.M.U. 313 and left to suffer painfully and left to die.

My second bone of contention is the closing date of wolf Hunting/trapping season. Most canids breed in late winter (mid-February), are pregnant for two months, and give birth in April. At least for wolves, anyway. We should not kill canines during the breeding season because it jeopardizes offspring survival. Bred female foxes, coyotes, and wolves depend on both parents for survival during the denning/whelping period. I know you know this because, in your latest edition of the November - December issue of *Montana Outdoors*, Lee Lamb wrote an article on the Red Fox in the Outdoors Portrait. See included attachments. It states that "males (fathers) are the sole provider for the homebound nursing female." Killing wolves and canines during this time frame is not an acceptable practice.

Regarding Commissioner Barrows' proposal to reduce trapping setbacks, why are we going backward on safety? Montana FWP is not requiring trappers to put warning signs in the general location of traplines near trailheads on public land, and now we are allowing setbacks that are even closer to trails? Why not err on the part of public safety? Traps are dangerous to everything: the target animal, the non-target animal, people (children), pets, and livestock. We cannot put the 2,000 to 2,500 trappers before the safety of one million residents of this state.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Cassandra Rideg

Wickman, Erik

From: Dustin Bennett <bennetts.linework@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 9:51 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for responsible wolf management utilizing trapping as a tool to protect ungulate populations

Dear Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing as a concerned hunter and lifelong Montana resident, with a deep respect for the state's natural resources and wildlife. My primary concern lies in the ongoing pressure on our ungulate populations—particularly elk and deer—due to the growing wolf population. While I am not advocating for the trapping of wolves for the sake of trapping alone, I feel compelled to speak out regarding the need for a more comprehensive approach to wildlife management in our state.

As an elk hunter, my primary goal has always been to feed my family and contribute to the conservation of Montana's wildlife. However, over the past several years, the increasing presence of wolves has fundamentally changed the landscape of hunting in the state. The elk and deer herds have been significantly impacted by wolf predation, and I've seen firsthand how this has altered their behaviors, distribution, and overall population health. As a result, hunting has become increasingly difficult, and in some cases, unsustainable.

While I have always been committed to hunting as a way to manage wildlife, I've come to understand that managing wolf populations is an essential tool in ensuring the health and balance of our ecosystem. Wolves, while an important part of the natural world, have caused serious disruptions in the health of our ungulate herds. It is my belief that, to preserve the integrity of our wildlife and our hunting opportunities, we must use every reasonable tool available—including regulated trapping and hunting of wolves—to bring balance to the ecosystem.

I recognize that wolf management is a complex issue and that there are many stakeholders with differing views. However, I believe that we cannot continue to allow special interest groups to dictate wildlife management policies that jeopardize the health of our large ungulate populations. The balance of nature in Montana has shifted dramatically, and we must prioritize the long-term health of our herds to ensure sustainable hunting and the continued vitality of our natural resources.

In conclusion, I urge the Montana FWP to consider all tools available for wolf management, including regulated trapping, as part of a comprehensive strategy to protect our elk and deer populations. The health of our herds should be our foremost concern, and I believe that responsible management of wolf numbers is essential to achieving that goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and working together to ensure that Montana's wildlife remains healthy and sustainable for generations to come.

Sincerely
Dustin Bennett
[Bennetts.linework@gmail.com](mailto:bennetts.linework@gmail.com)
1242 Big Sky Ln
Stevensville, MT 59870

Wickman, Erik

From: michele dieterich <telechele@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 11:30 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on wolf and furbearer trapping regulations 2025 and amendment

November 7, 2024

Madame Chair and Fish and Wildlife Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I live in Ravalli County and am very concerned about the recently added amendment to the Wolf and Furbearer Trapping Regulations for 2025. The amendment would eliminate setbacks on roads closed to OHVs and motor vehicles in the winter in Ravalli County. It would include roads closed to motor vehicles and OHV's but open to snowmobiles. It makes four exceptions to this amendment which are high use areas for snowmobiles in winter.

Ravalli County has seen almost a 20% population increase since 2010 and is the seventh largest county in Montana according to recent census data. This increases recreation and puts more users of all types on the roads proposed for this elimination of trapping setbacks. This amendment is a recipe for disaster for pets, pet owners, children, and other users of public lands in Ravalli County. It will displace users that fear the loss or injury of a pet or child using the area. It will displace users who do not wish to encounter a trapped animal that is in pain or dead. Trappers are a very small percentage of public land users. Their convenience should not take precedence over public safety.

There are many other high use areas that are not considered in this amendment: cross country ski trails in the Chief Joseph pass area, Larry Creek, Lost Trail, Camas Creek, Coyote Coulee, Lake Como, and Moose Creek to name a few. These areas experience high recreational use and should be considered with the four exceptions for increased setbacks. Hikers, bikers, horseback riders, snowshoers, skiers, and their children and pets use these areas specifically because there is no motor vehicle use. They should not be displaced or put in danger while enjoying public lands.

Recommended trapping setbacks for high use areas are much more than the 50-foot setbacks for furbearers and 150-foot setbacks for wolves proposed in the amendment. Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) recommends a 500-foot setback for all ground sets including those for wolves. This precaution to protect public land users was adopted in 2013 for public land roads and trails with high levels of recreational use. With a burgeoning population in Ravalli County, the commission should recommend 500-foot setbacks for all ground sets in all areas of high recreational use not just the high use snowmobile areas listed in the amendment.

The Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks does not recommend this amendment. They write, "The amendment reduces the number of routes with setbacks and has real potential to increase non-target captures of domestic dogs and reduce support for recreational trapping."

I recommend that the Commission keep the current setbacks on public roads in Ravalli County closed to motor vehicles and OHV's during trapping season, including those roads open to snowmobile traffic. And increase setbacks to 500 feet for all ground sets for the four exceptions and other areas of high recreational use like Camas and Moose Creek Roads, Larry Creek, Lost Trail and Chief Joseph Pass, Crazy Creek, Coyote Coulee, the Lake Como area, and other high use roads and trails in the Sapphires.

Thanks for your time, considering my comments, and keeping all users safe during trapping season.

Sincerely,
Michele Dieterich
Hamilton, MT

Wickman, Erik

From: Calli Michaels <cmichaels@mlawmt.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 3:46 PM
To: Wickman, Erik; FWP Commission
Cc: Karli Johnson
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Joint Comments re Proposed Trapping Restrictions
Attachments: 20241107 - MFBF_MWGA Cmts re Trapping.pdf

Erik,

Please find attached joint comments from Montana Farm Bureau and Montana Wool Growers Association regarding the proposed trapping restrictions. Please confirm receipt and let me know if I need to mail them to another address.

Thank you,
Calli

Calli J. Michaels, Attorney
MICHAELS LAW, PLLC
PO Box 75
Silver Star, MT 59751
(406) 660-4265

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Wickman, Erik

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Wickman, Erik

From: Jolene Buermann <jolene.buermann@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 11:41 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Grizzly

Has a grizzly ever been captured by a coyote trap 🐾 I mean really who catches a grizzly 😞 why fight for predators that are eating and attacking our moose, buffalo, deer and elk population 😞 i believe California needs the grizzly population back that way since ah that is there main mascot 🐾 and I'll help pay to manage them if they visit Montana 🐾

Wickman, Erik

From: Trina Bradley <trinajobradley@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 9:54 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Coyote Trapping Comments

Chair Robinson and Members of the Commission,

My name is Trina Jo Bradley, and I am a livestock producer on the Rocky Mountain Front. Our ranch is located on Birch Creek, about halfway between Choteau and Browning.

I am writing to express my support for the proposed 2024-25 coyote trapping regulations.

While I understand that additional trapping permits, even free ones, may seem unnecessary to many Montanans, I recognize the importance of these regulations in helping the Department collect essential data. This data collection is a crucial step toward meeting the requirements for delisting grizzly bears in Montana.

My primary concern is ensuring the privacy of the producers that sign affidavits. However, after discussing this with Director Temple, I feel reassured that all necessary precautions will be taken to protect our identities.

Thank you for your consideration and the dedication you bring to this important work.

Sincerely,

Trina Jo Bradley

Bradley Ranch

406.450.1577

trinajobradley@yahoo.com

Trina Jo Bradley

Executive Director, Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group

406.450.1577

trinajobradley@yahoo.com

www.rockymountainfrontranchlands.org [rockymountainfrontranchlands.org]

"Courage is fear that said its prayers." - Karl Barth

Wickman, Erik

From: Nancy Brown <chsnbrown@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 8:52 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Fall 2024-Winter 2025 Wolf and Other Species Trapping Regulations

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my concern on the trapping regulations. I have 3 dogs and regularly walk on public roads closed to motor vehicles in Ravalli County. The proposed regulations will put not only my dogs and I at risk, but a large amount of the dog walking community and non -target wildlife at risk.

The amendment proposed by Commissioner Burrows would curtail the communities ability to walk on public lands and increase peril to those who do. Please strike this amendment . I would also ask setbacks be increased to 500 feet in high use areas in Ravalli County including the four exceptions to this amendment.

I request mandatory signage be placed at areas on public lands that do have trapping. At least, this would somewhat lessen the risk to those who would choose to not walk the area unless their animals are leashed. Please do not let traps be baited...this encourages pets, as well as other non-target wildlife to life-threatening situations.

I have lived in this county going on 25 years and have yet to see any information posted anywhere on trapping, including reports of trapping taken place or warnings to the public. In my opinion, this would be invaluable to the public who do have a right to enjoy the public lands.

Thank you for listening. I will be looking forward to seeing the public's concerns addressed on this matter.

Sincerely,

Nancy Velehradsky-Brown

Wickman, Erik

From: Penny Ritchie <ritchie.penny@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 10:31 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 2024-2025 TRAPPING REGULATIONS

My brother was walking along a road with his dog, and the dog was caught in a trap that my brother had no tools to release. The dog died in front of him — a horrible horrible death.

There is absolutely no reason to put pets, wildlife, and perhaps even children at risk because trappers can't seem to be able to walk a few hundred feet to set their traps. Trapping should be banned altogether, but at the very least there should be rules in place to avoid accidental injuries and death to non-targeted species.

Thank you for your help.

Penny Ritchie
Bitterroot Resident 2005-2024
Still in Montana
406-396-7300