



Beaver Tales

VERMONT TRAPPER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Winter
2016

President's Message

Hello Vermont Trappers and Supporters:

Just in case you have been living in a cave somewhere, we are going to be in a fight for our trapping rights this year. A slick new anti-group called Protect Our Wildlife, with funding from out of state groups, has been putting out ads on TV and radio as well as meeting with legislators to try to end trapping. One of the new approaches that they are using is tying up the Fish & Wildlife Dept. with the freedom of information requests for anything that mentions non-target catches (dogs, cats, hawks, owls, lynx, etc.) in an attempt to show that there are many non-target animals caught in traps for the low number of traps that are set. Every time a game warden is called because of a dog in a trap for instance, he has to report that with the state. Even if a dog or cat or whatever, is released unharmed it still counts as a non-target. However, the real problem is the low number of traps set verses the number of non-targets. This is caused by LAZY TRAPPERS!!!

They are getting their numbers right from the Fish & Wildlife Department's data. The way the Department keeps track of the numbers is through the trapper mail survey. Currently only one in four trappers return the survey, so it looks like not that many traps are set each year. We are going to be in a fight this year and not everybody can come to Montpelier or give money to help fight, I understand that, but everybody can return the survey. Even if you only trapped a couple of damage beavers, or a skunk under the porch, it is vitally important that every trap is counted and every night it is set is logged. This doesn't cost anything, not even a stamp. Don't let the anti's take away our rights because YOU were too lazy to take 10 minutes to fill out the survey. If you haven't got one yet they will be available at the spring fur auction or from the F&W Dept. Just call and ask.

Bruce Baroffio, President
bbaroffio@hotmail.com
802-485-4051

Vermont Trappers Association Annual Spring Fur Auction Saturday March 19, 2016

The 2016 Spring Fur Auction will be held at the Whitcomb High School in Bethel, Vermont on Saturday, March 19th. The doors will open at 6:00 AM and the auction will begin at 9:00AM. There will be a 5% commission on all furs sold. If you are not happy with the price offered, you may withdraw your fur and there will be no charge. Fur Lot Numbers will be given out on a first come, first serve basis, For more information on this auction contact **Dan Olmstead** at 802-464-6344 or **Bruce Baroffio** at 802-485-4051.

GUN RAFFLE TICKETS

Inserted in this newsletter is a sheet of raffle tickets for the Spring Gun Raffle. Support your association by buying tickets yourself or selling to family and friends. Take a chance on winning a great gun. The tickets are \$5.00 each, so fill out the ticket stubs, enclose a check made out to VTA and send to Vermont Trappers Association, PO Box 451, Vernon, VT 05354 before March 16th. Drawing is on March 20th at Lamoille Valley Gun Show in Essex Jct. Need not be present to win.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello everyone, hope all is well.

We have had a good long stretch with minimal anti-trapping issues coming up. As of late however, there have been some grumblings in the belly of the anti's. The anti's have been getting more organized and rumors have been flying around about some possible anti-trap legislation. Some of you may remember back in school when we were taught to develop a plan in the event of a fire. You are supposed to have a route (climbing out a window, etc.) We were taught to stop, drop and roll if we catch on fire. What have you been taught to do in the event an anti-trapping bill gets introduced to legislature? Obviously, you are going to do whatever it takes to defend our trapping privilege. While there is no official procedure to deal with this, I have some recommendations.

First recommendation is to NOT go off spewing a bunch of garbage. You need to think about what you say and not sound off with emotionally charged rhetoric. Next, you need to realize that trappers have science to back them and trapping is a wildlife management tool. Without trapping, there would be no effective way to manage furbearer populations.

Next, I would call or email my local legislators, and make sure they are aware that you are a trapper and make sure they are aware of the benefits of trapping. Benefits include, but are not limited to: population management, disease control, a renewable source of organic meats, renewable source of clothing,

an important source of supplemental income for Vermont families. Before I hung up the phone, I would tell them of a trap line memory that is vivid in your mind. One that comes to my mind is the time my boy and I caught a bobcat in a coyote set, and had to release it. My boy was about 10 at the time. I held the bobcat down and I had him take the trap off its foot. The bobcat was hissing, and you could see its fangs and claws going after the release pole. After about a minute or so we were able to get it released and in one bound it jumped about 15 feet, and cleared the nearby brook. My boy and I just looked at each other and said, "Wow!"

In order to be proactive, trappers need to build a relationship with their senators and representatives. They may not be in favor of trapping, but they should know who you are, and where you stand. Believe me; the anti's have likely already made their calls. I encourage you to reach out to them. I generally have access to a list of all representatives and senators, so if you don't know who represents you, please feel free to drop me an email or give me a call. With you guys working on the outside, and the Association working on the inside, we can and will keep trapping in this State.

John P. Lapre, Vice-President
Beavertrapper1@aol.com
802-483-0043

TREASURER/SECRETARY REPORT

Hello Trappers! Hope everyone is doing well and has had a great trapping season. I'm writing this right after our December auction. We had a fairly low turnout and prices were not near last year's levels. Quite a few coyotes and other pelts were "no saled" but most folks seemed happy to be there and to meet up with our friends we haven't seen for a while. We did get some good press in the Valley News. They had a photographer and reporter there and did a good story that stayed fairly accurate. Bring all your bundles of furs to the March Auction and maybe you can make it on the cover of the newspaper also!

A few points to bring up: Point 1) I'm sure you have heard some of the anti-trapping "public service announcements" and/or seen the various letters to the editors that have been written by members of the Protect Our Wildlife group. We are keeping an eye on this group's efforts and have plans developed for moving forward. We will be asking for your support on any legislative issues that come forward. This will be in the form of letter writing, volunteering your time, trips to the Statehouse and getting your friends and fellow trapping supporters lined up to help us out as well.

Point 2) We trappers need to do a better job completing the Vermont Fish and Wildlife trappers' survey that we receive each year. This is the source of much of the data that F&W uses to determine their furbearer management plans and this data is critical when we attempt to make changes to any trapping rules in the game book. The surveys are usually due in early April after the last trapping season closes; I just received mine in the mail a couple of weeks ago. Please fill out the survey and return it; even if you didn't trap.

Point 3) Support the Banquet with any donations of new products that you can. We have great interest in outdoors related items but also in non-outdoors related items. Quality homemade items are especially appreciated. Donations can be given to one of the active directors or can be arranged to be picked up. Call me if you have something and I can help arrange for pick-up.

Last, some old news from the 2015 Rendezvous: The winner of the Free Youth Raffle (LIFETIME HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSE) was Damien Atherton. The 10 Gun Raffle Winners were: 1) Herve Cote, VT, 2) Lou Maccaroni, NY, 3) Randy Jarve, VT, 4) Mike Abraham, VT, 5) Jesse Kinisley, NH, 6) Ralph Brown, VT, 7) Terry Hebert, NH, 8) Jason Shappy, VT, 9) Anna Morse, NH, and 10) Chris Bernier, VT. The Ladies Frying Pan Toss Winner was Meg Larrabee and the Junior Frying Pan Toss Winner was Maria Legacy. The Pie Baking Contest Winners were: 1st Place: Lisa Calchera, 2nd Place: Doreen Perrin, and 3rd Place: Clair Pike. Congratulations to all the Winners and see you in September of 2016!

On the financial side of things, we are still doing well. We expect to be spending some of the organizations funds this year to oppose any anti efforts that are on-going. That is primarily what we have been putting money aside for so we intend to spend it to assure we don't lose any of our trapping privileges but we are also going to need all of your help to convince the folks in Montpelier to leave us alone. If it ain't broke don't fix it (and I haven't heard of anything that indicates that our trapping regulations, seasons or impacts on the furbearer population is broken).

Good health and good trapping! (and get your surveys filled out; land trapping is over so at least fill out that section now while it is fresh in your mind and it will take much less time to complete the rest of the survey when you are done trapping for the season).

Jim Calchera, Treasurer/Secretary

quiltrap@comcast.net

802-722-9790

NATIONAL TRAPPER ASSOCIATION REPORT

Unless you have been living under a rock, in a cave, or so far back in the brush that time has stopped, you must know this is an election year. Everyone also knows that the most important thing to a politician is numbers. Second only to the amount of numbers they can get to follow a dollar sign is the number of votes they can get on their side.

Whenever the NTA needs to talk to politicians the number of members, people we represent, and monies we generate comes in to focus. The more members an organization has the more attention you get. Even with prices of furs at all-time lows it is very important to keep memberships up. Your dues to the NTA and the VTA help pay for our presence being felt

in Washington DC and Montpelier. You can sign up on the Association's website, at the Fur Auction in Bethel March 19, 2016, at a VTA Directors Meeting, or you can call me and I'll send you an application. Another important thing we all must do this year is to come in from the woods, fields, swamps and cold and VOTE. Who are you going to blame if we lose our right to hunt, fish, and trap. A few minutes of your time can save our heritage for future generations.

Dave Perrin

dlperrinx2@myfairpoint.com

802-728-5935

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Greetings from your membership director. I'd like to take time to talk about two things today.

First, in an effort to become more efficient in communicating with the membership, just shy of 800 trappers, I am trying to gather email addresses for each member. We will use this eventually to send out the quarterly report, membership renewal notices, as well as to keep you informed about other issues that may arise. Directors from each county will be calling you and asking for your email address. You can also email me or call me to talk to me directly. Second, we are facing some anti trapping legislation in Montpelier this session. We have about 15-20 dedicated directors who are on top of this issue but we need your help. We need for you to keep up to date with what is going on in Montpelier. We also need you to contact your local representatives and let them know you are opposed to any bill that may affect you as a trapper, hunter or fisher. It only takes a few minutes to pick up the phone or to email them. Five minutes of your time now could keep you out on the line trapping years from now.

Peter Lossmann

batsinthebelfryadc@yahoo.com

802-989-4451

NOT IN MY BACKYARD

I am sure you have heard this phrase somewhere before. Another common saying is they will never stop trapping, hunting or fishing in Vermont, or anywhere. Well I am here to tell you we need to start paying more attention to what is going on around us. I am sure you all know about New Jersey a few years back when trapping was voted out for the most part. The last three years the state of Maine has been fighting the antis and the HSUS for their rights to trap. Maine somewhat won, but there are many more restrictions on trapping.

Well, like many unpleasant things in life, the antis have made it to Vermont. They go by the name of Protect Our Wildlife, or P.O.W. They should be totally ashamed of using this name because as we all know POW means prisoners of war, an acronym used to describe folks who fought for our country in war and were captured, tortured, and totally mistreated. This group of people has made it to Vermont. Check out their web site if you have not had a good laugh lately. These folks obviously live a sheltered life and know little of how nature works. Here is an example. A fantastic trapper who resides in the town of Bolton wanted to trap an area known as Preston Pond. Doing as he should, he approached the town Select board to ask permission to trap this land as the Town owned the property. What he thought would be a simple yes or no answer turned the town of Bolton upside down. The protectors hit the social media with a string of misinformation that would stretch to the moon and back. Before we knew it the whole event turned into an item on the select board agenda.

A concerned citizen thankfully contacted me, so myself and a few trappers went to the meeting. There were approximately 60 Protectors there, 6 trappers and 5 hunters.

The protectors testified first. They exaggerated greatly. Did you know a beaver in a 330 struggles for 30-45 minutes before it expires? This is what they claimed. Did you know that people and animals will

get caught in 330s under water in November? The list went on and on, way too long to print here. Next it was our turn. I provided each member of the select board with a copy of the best management practices for beaver trapping, explaining that trappers have science and biology to back up their trapping methods. The protectors had no data or experience to back up their claims. I also explained that unless you are swimming or climbing trees in November your chances of getting in a 330 are pretty much nil.

The board heard our professional testimony and were impressed. The protectors were rude and obnoxious to the point of being asked to leave the meeting. The testimony ended and the board voted. Two voted yes, two voted no. The final vote was a yes from a self-proclaimed vegetarian who advised she voted yes because the pond was purchased from taxpayer's dollars and the traditional uses should go on forever, and trapping was a traditional use.

Moral of the story, keep track of what is going on in your towns. This whole situation could have turned out a whole lot worse had it not been for a concerned citizen alerting us to a potential problem. We have seen these groups in the past and they usually start with the easy stuff and end up trying to end all forms of trapping, hunting and fishing.

My request to all is to become aware, become involved. Join your local clubs and help where you can, financially or in person. Keep your ears open and pass on what you hear, even if you think it's silly. Sitting around doing nothing will get you nothing. Ask yourself this question: How would I feel if I got up tomorrow morning and could not trap, hunt, fish or even own a gun from this day forward? I know how I would feel!!!!!!

I would personally and on behalf of all trappers in Vermont like to thank the members of the Town of Bolton Select board for conducting their diligent service, listening to the facts and fiction and voting in favor of science and biology versus baseless rhetoric.

Randy Barrows

citrgitr@msn.com

802-355-7496

2015 RENDEZVOUS REPORT

For all those who attended this past year's Rendezvous and the ones who couldn't make it, I'd just like to say it went very well. Thanks to so many who stepped up and helped. Every September there are many events, booths and games to plan and manage, lots of setups and takedowns, not to mention the delicious meals. All those who help to make this weekend fun and educational year after year deserve a pile of credit. Without their participation, there would be no VTA Rendezvous. Mark your calendars for September 10 & 11th this coming Fall. Thank you again; see you there.

Jim Stewart

flytrap_adc@vermontel.net

802-885-4499

BANQUET COMMITTEE REPORT

On **March 26, 2016** we will host the VTA's 23th annual fund raising banquet at the new location in the Barre Civic Center, 20 Auditorium Hill, Barre, Vermont. This is our major fund raising event that allows us to sponsor campers at Conservation Camps, provide college scholarships, and provide financial assistance to a merit of local, regional and statewide outdoor sports oriented events. This will be a sellout and tickets are limited, so get you tickets early. It is the premium outdoor sports banquet in Vermont. Don't miss it!

Dinner tickets are \$30. There are 100's of prizes i.e. rifles, shotguns, muzzleloaders, traps, wildlife art, gun safes etc. **Call Joe and Deb Epler for Tickets at 802-875-4511.**

FISH AND WILDLIFE BOARD REPORT

Some of you know me as the past President of the Vermont Trappers Association, now I am currently serving as a Board member on the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board from Lamoille County. I would like to take this time to go over the process involved in making a change to one of our rules & regulations. Bear with me on this, as I know some of you know the process, but there are a few out there that do not and it helps when you understand it can be a LONG and DRAWN OUT process at times. As a Board, we review current rules and regulations to determine if they are working the way they were intended when they were instituted. We also accept petitions from groups that would like to see a change made to the Fish & Wildlife rules and regulations. These petitions are gone over with F. & G. Dept. biologist and law enforcement personnel to determine how they will affect the fish and game in question or how enforcement will be effected. At this point a period of open input from the public (that's you by the way), is put into effect which may include public meetings around the state (like the Deer Hearings), letters, phone calls, and or e-mails. A second meeting is held where changes can be made based on the public's input or new information provided by the Department, once this vote has been taken the rule or regulation must go before the Legislative Rules Committee for approval. If the proposal is approved then the Board take a final third vote approving or voting the proposal down (at this point the chances of the proposal not passing are quite slim). Depending on the time of year a proposed change may go into effect right away without much public notice or it could wait and become effective the following calendar year.

Over the nine months I have been on the Board, it has looked at and discussed several proposals including but not limited to: Use of Natural Based Deer Lures, the Daily bag limit for Geese, Spear fishing in state waters, Extending Partridge season into January, Moose Hunting

Rules, Big Game tooth extraction (deer & bear) and reporting rules (this information is very important in determining the health and wellbeing of our big game in Vermont), Turkey Season dates and times, Shooting Ranges, Cross Bows, and Early Muzzleloader Season.

While some of these topics were voted on and approved others will appear again this year as they required way more time and information than was available to make an informed decision on the proposal. I am sure that the topics of Turkey Season dates and times and an Early Muzzleloader season will be in front of the Board again this year.

Let's talk about tooth extraction on both Deer and Bear. This to me is a no brainer; the teeth are not being used in a mount so why not pull that one tooth and let our biologist get age and health information from it? When we go in to check in our deer or bear, we all want to know what it weighed and how many points it had. We, as sportsmen and sportswomen, all want Vermont's deer and bear to be in the best possible health they can be in. By providing our biologist the tools they need to determine age, sex, reproductive organs (in the case of female moose & bears), weight, points, and location (town or county) where taken, growth charts can be developed for the different areas of the state to determine how the Vermont's deer and bear are doing. Next year should you be one of the fortunate hunters to take a deer or bear or both, give it some serious thought about providing all the possible information you can to help Vermont's biologist in determining the health and age structure of Vermont's big game populations. As Hunters, Anglers, and Trappers you need to be involved and informed so take the time to either join a like-minded group or contact your county representative if you have questions or concerns. It's not only your right to be active it's your obligation. In closing I want to let you know that you can contact me at:

Bill Pickens

bpickens46@aol.com

802-888-3736



Vermont Trappers Association
P.O. Box 451
Vernon, Vermont 05354



Coming Events:

Barre Gun Show	February 6-7	Barre Auditorium, Barre, VT
White River Gun Show	February 27-28	American Legion, White River, VT
Lamoille Valley Gun Show	March 19-20	Fair Grounds, Essex Jct, VT
VTA Fur Auction	March 19	Whitcomb High School, Bethel, VT
VTA Annual Banquet	March 26	Barre Auditorium, Barre, VT

BUY TANNED FUR PELTS

Buy fur pelts directly from your association at very good prices. See the list of fur we have on hand by tuning into the website www.vermonttrappers.com. Visit the VTA booth at one of the fairs/field days listed under coming events and buy the fur of your choice or call Brent at 888-4086 and he will mail it to you . They make great gifts! Support your association!

VISIT THE VERMONT TRAPPERS ASSOCIATION WEBSITE: www.vermonttrappers.com