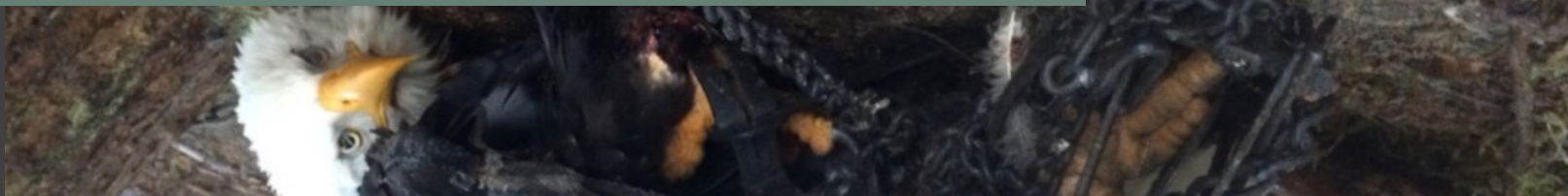




Act 159

Trapping in Vermont



Act 159 Working Group

BMPs Cannot Make Traps Humane:

- BMPs are more about PR than wildlife welfare

FWD Working Group (WG) Failures:

- 7 members were active trapping advocates, 3 were wildlife advocates (one of those was added only after the other wildlife advocacy groups insisted).
- The legislative mandate to consider trail setbacks resulted in no progress. For example, WG reduced Setbacks from Trails to only **3.6% of the state's land! This undercuts the Legislature's requirement of setbacks and is potentially even dangerously misleading.**
- Methods of killing were tabled on the promise of future consideration but were then ignored.

Moving On:

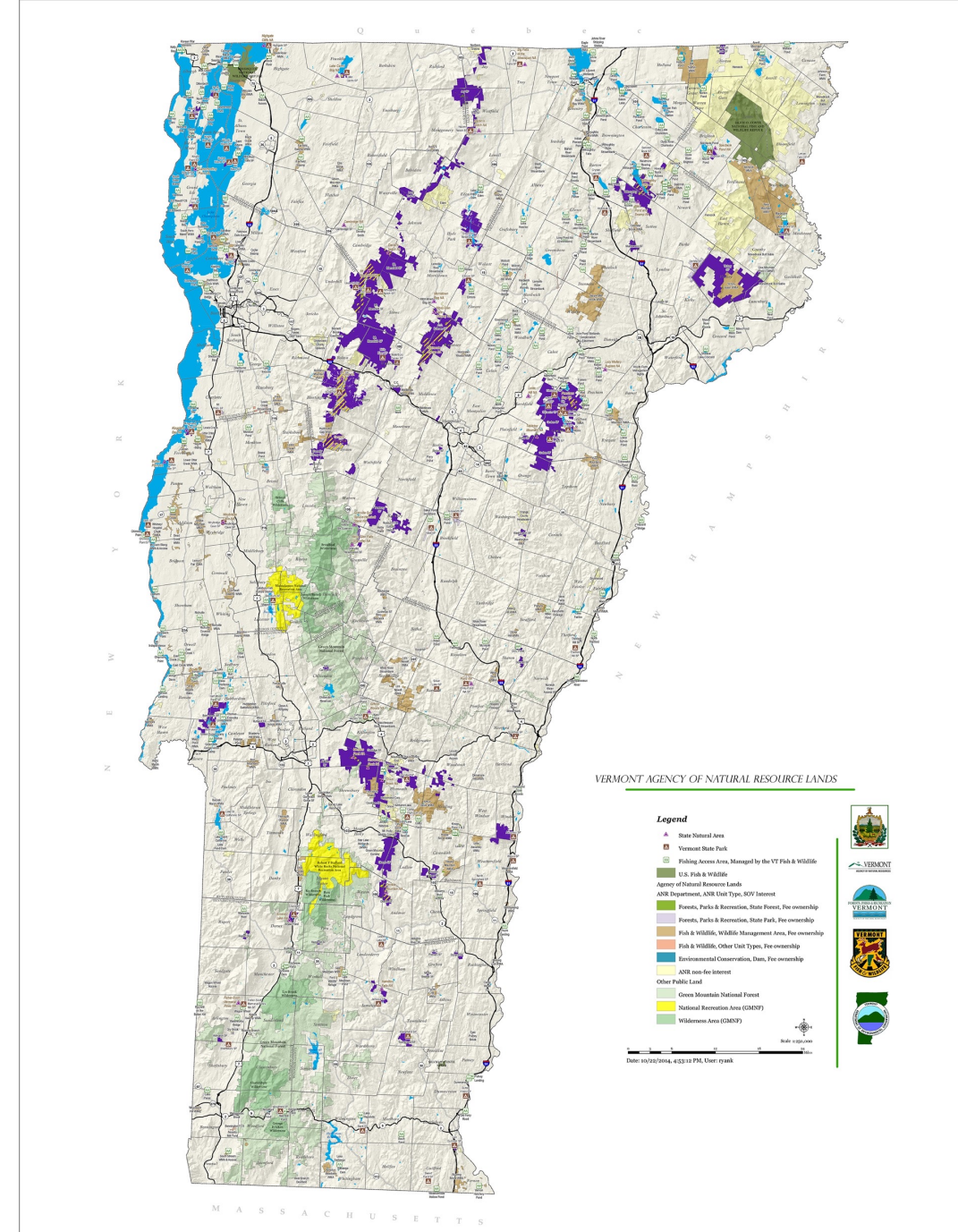
- The FWD failed to abide by A.159. The inherent cruelty of trapping cannot be masked by cosmetic add-ons. Life can be cruel and sometimes, such as with car crashes and carpet bombing, we must abide cruelty for the greater good. However, such grim realities need to be put to a rigorous cost-benefit analysis:
- The cruelty and community risk is not worth the community benefit from recreational trapping. Some trapping may pass such an analysis and S.111 allows such trapping.

Trail Setbacks For Traps

The DARK PURPLE represents the only areas in Vermont that would have trap setbacks from publicly accessed trails under the FWD's arbitrary "state-owned lands excepting Wildlife Management Areas" proposal.

It is 3.6% of the entire state of Vermont, much of it high in the Camels Hump and Mt. Mansfield State Forests where it is impractical for trappers to check traps daily. Therefore, very little land on which trappers may set traps will have setback requirements from publicly accessed trails.

This map was presented to the working group in the third meeting. To have nonetheless proceeded with this arbitrary and draconian restriction, directly undermining the clear language of A.159, let alone the legislative intent, speaks volumes.



BMPs Cannot Make Traps Humane

- Best Management Practices (BMPs) are a marketing ploy in response to the threat of banning fur imports due to the cruelty of trapping. A peer-reviewed paper being published in 2023 supports the lack of valid science behind BMPs.
- The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies advises our Department of Fish and Wildlife on how to promote trapping. They advise trappers to stay away from social media: *"Your excitement and enthusiasm for trapping is the best promotion! Sharing why you enjoy trapping is a great way to spread the message that **trapping is a fun outdoor activity.**"*
- Brian Giddings, fur-bearer coordinator for F&W in Montana: *"FWP regulates furbearer trapping seasons for **recreational harvest opportunities.** Montana's harvest seasons are **not based on reducing or controlling disease.**"* (2009)

Vermont trappers and the reality of Best Management Practices being practiced on a baby bobcat (2 min):

Guy 1: **laughing** fuckin' A. We're gonna break in the whacking stick.

Guy 2: He's a little guy. Must be other bitches and babies around.

Guy 1: That's what I'm saying. There's gotta be if there's one that little.



BMP Traps Cannot Be Humane

- This is a BMP-approved trap.
- No matter what you do to the traps, **you cannot control a trapped animal's response**

Raccoon in a BMP trap (10 seconds):
"Man, he did a number. He worked on that probably all night trying to get out of there."

Notice that the raccoon stripped all the bark off the tree while struggling all night.



BMP Traps Cannot Be Humane

- This is a BMP-approved trap.
- Trapped animals **struggle, flip around, bite at the trap, pull, run in circles, and claw at trees** for hours or until they reach complete exhaustion.



Lynx trapped in a “padded” trap (9 seconds):

Did the Lynx suffer less because this is a “padded” trap?

BMP Traps Cannot Be Humane

- This is another BMP-approved trap.
- No trap can prevent the frantic struggling of a wild animal.

Fox and coyote trapped in “padded” traps (4 seconds, 20 seconds):

Why do trappers say the animals are just lying there when they check their traps?

Because after hours of this, they are in shock and exhausted. This coyote continued to struggle all through the night and well into the morning.



BMP Cannot Make Traps Humane

“Any sanctioned use of leg hold traps should be accompanied by evidence that their use is necessary and the most humane option that meets the needs of the research or other sanctioned use.”

The American Veterinary Medical Association

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/literature-reviews/welfare-implications-leghold-trap-use-conservation-and-research>

Bobcat trapped by rear foot (30 seconds):

Is this “necessary use?” Is this “the most humane” option?

We are allowing this for recreation and some people’s fun.

Most Vermonters do not support this, no matter how you ask the question.



BMPs Cannot Make Traps Humane

- According to BMPs, a “quick” kill is 5 minutes.
- For underwater traps, it can take even longer than that for animals to drown.

Regulated for FWD means:

- No bag limits. A trapper can trap and kill as many animals as they want.
- No trap limit. A trapper can put out as many traps as they want.
- Almost no restrictions on where those traps are placed.



Moving On

- There is no scientific justification for Best Management Practices
- These are moral decisions, not science decisions.
- In their surveys the VT FWD never asked about leghold, body crushing or drowning traps--only "regulated trapping." UVM's Center for Rural Studies asked about use of these types of traps specifically.

“

Even lab rats have to be treated more humanely than animals that are subject to trapping.

-T. Winston Vickers, associate veterinarian,
University of California, Davis Wildlife Health Center

Moving On

- Recreational trapping has a huge cost to our community.
- The recreation of a small group imposes a heavy cost on a precious public resource, our beloved pets, and the human beings who suffer some of these losses, almost all in the name of recreation.

December 2022:

Clara, killed by a baited, body-crushing trap that snapped on her neck. This happened while on a walk with her owner. Clara suffocated in her owner's arms.

Meat bait that attracted Clara shown upper right.



Moving On



Appendix

- According to the United States Centers for Disease Control, the National Academy of Sciences, and the World Health Organization, there is no scientific evidence that trapping controls the spread of disease such as rabies.
- Chris Bernier, fur-bearer biologist for F&W in Vermont: (see image on right)
- Brian Giddings, fur-bearer coordinator for F&W in Montana: "FWP regulates furbearer trapping seasons for recreational harvest opportunities. Montana's harvest seasons are not based on reducing or controlling disease" (e-mail response to Footloose Montana, March 16, 2009).

From: Bernier, Chris <Chris.Bernier@vermont.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 26, 2022 11:23 AM
To: Saunders, Chris <Chris.Saunders@vermont.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Furbearer Survey 1st Draft

Chris,

Thanks again for your patience with me on this. As I expected given all the players involved and your efforts to corral them, the survey looks great and is hard for me to find any significant/meaningful edits. It is long as previously noted so I paid particular attention to questions/sections that I thought could be deleted but I only settled on one section - "Outdoor Activities" - that seemed like it could be dropped without too much loss of important data. I also thought that the "Awareness" section could be deleted but then saw that responses to this section were used to narrow down later questions so maybe it should just remain as is. I agree with all RM's recommendations to streamline the questionnaire and only suggest that for those questions which have a random allocation (i.e., APPROVAL / DISAPPROVAL OF VARIOUS REASONS TO TRAP and KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARD FURBEARER SPECIES) that we narrow the list down so that all participants are asked the same questions. For example, we could easily eliminate the following questions from the "approval/disapproval of various reason to trap section" without impacting the value of the survey:

1. *Trapping to manage furbearer populations to reduce wildlife diseases that could affect people, pets, and other wildlife. We do not put this forward as a rationale for trapping (or at least we shouldn't IMHO).*
2. *Trapping to control certain wildlife populations so that they do not become too numerous and destroy wildlife habitat. Other than nutria trapping to our south, there really is no other example of this being the case that I am aware of - certainly no such case here in VT.*
3. *Trapping to relocate wild animals from where they are abundant to places where they once existed as part of a restoration program. Who wouldn't want us to restore populations?! I get why we ask this question but in reality there is no such work on the horizon and, if we should ever find ourselves in the need to do more restoration work using traps, I feel fairly confident that the public would support our effort even if it used traps.*

Assuming we accept RM's recommendation of randomly asking participants only 8 of the 11 questions, eliminating the three questions above wouldn't shorten the survey but it would boost the response rates for the remaining 8 questions. Similarly, if we narrow the species down from nine to say four or five key indicator species in the "attitudes towards furbearer species" section and then randomly select three from this narrower list, we will maintain as high a response rate as possible per species and would still get the data we need for making decisions on the entire suite. If you think that makes sense, I suggest beaver, otter, coyote, bobcat, and raccoon. Others may think differently than me on what key indicator species to include but I'm guessing there will be some redundancy in responses for some of these species like raccoon and skunk, or like fisher and bobcat, etc. Again, going this route doesn't shorten the survey but it will maintain better samples sizes than spreading the questions out over nine species. Last, I really liked the inclusion/exclusion of the word "regulated" in the "approval/disapproval of trapping" section. Let me know if you need any clarification on any of these comments or if you need me to do anything else to help move this forward. Thanks.

Appendix

BMPs do nothing to protect non-targeted animals



Caught the slowest moving animal today !! Haha

👍😂🤔 64

24 Comments

👍 Like

💬 Comment


View 7 more comments

 [Redacted] Posting non-target catches really doesn't benefit trapping as a whole,,

Like · Reply · 14h

👍 4

↪ 6 Replies

 [Redacted] Stupid showing that

Like · Reply · 14h

👍 4

↪ 1 Reply

 [Redacted] Protect its a paint turtle 🐢

Like · Reply · 14h

👍 1