

**From:** Bernier, Chris  
**Sent:** Monday, September 26, 2022 11:23 AM  
**To:** Saunders, Chris  
**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.

Chris



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**From:** Saunders, Chris <Chris.Saunders@vermont.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 2, 2022 10:53 AM  
**To:** Bernier, Chris <Chris.Bernier@vermont.gov>; Fowler, Sean <Sean.Fowler@vermont.gov>; Meier, Nicole <Nicole.Meier@vermont.gov>; Adler, MaryBeth <MaryBeth.Adler@vermont.gov>; Royar, Kim <Kim.Royar@vermont.gov>; Gieder, Katherina <Katherina.Gieder@vermont.gov>

**Subject:** For Review: Furbearer Survey 1st Draft  
**Importance:** High

All,

I've attached the first of draft of the furbearer survey instrument for review. You may or may not know of its status since the last time we met, but it was approved for funding and Responsive Management was chosen as the vendor. We provided a survey outline that was based on discussions from contentious issues working group with further input from Dave and Chris. To track trends, most of the credibility questions come from our past surveys and much of the furbearer management section is identical to the Maine furbearer study from two years ago. At the moment, the survey is a tad too long, so Responsive Management has added comments in red that would reduce the size and length. They all make sense to me, but there are still some areas we could trim. There may also be questions that you feel are not necessary or needed or that were omitted. I have already done a preliminary edit, but wanted you to see the original copy first.

If possible, please send me any comments by Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup>. This is only the first draft so you will see it again. However, if we can finalize the questions by the end of September, the survey can be conducted in early October.

Chris

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**From:** Mark Damian Duda <[mark@responsivemanagement.com](mailto:mark@responsivemanagement.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 25, 2022 12:16 PM  
**To:** Saunders, Chris <[Chris.Saunders@vermont.gov](mailto:Chris.Saunders@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** VT Furbearer survey for review  
**Importance:** High

**EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.**

Hi Chris:

Attached is the first draft of the survey for your review.

We included all that you wanted in your outline except the bear management questions. The survey is already long (and we have suggestions for making it shorter for any one respondent), and adding the bear section would make it really long... It would work better as its own survey. Even not including the bear questions it's a little bit long so if you don't need some things in there maybe we could cut it down a little...

We have some suggestions and comments imbedded in the survey draft in **red font**.

Let me know what you think –

I am excited as we'll get you some great information.

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