

**Missoulian, Feb. 9, 2009**

**Claims in letter appear blatantly false**

In response to his letter of January 28<sup>th</sup>, I must urge Mr. Wustner to check his source(s) of information carefully. I could find no statement attributed to the NWF that included Wustner's claims about misleading the public with emotionally based information. Further research also yielded no position statement from the CDC advocating furbearer trapping as a method of population or disease control. His claims are blatantly false. There is significant evidence that attempts at population reduction, such as trapping, are ineffective in preventing the spread of diseases. In fact, such activities may *increase* the chance of disease propagation through an animal species.

A detailed scientific discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this letter. Let me leave Wustner with a few questions instead. What is the actual human incidence of the diseases you mentioned within the state of Montana? (I'll give you a hint – it's extremely low). Since the organism responsible for bubonic plague (*Yersinia pestis*) is carried by rodents, and traps kill many of the animal species which control the rodent populations, how can trapping be useful in controlling this disease? If trapping is, as you claim, such an integral part of animal-borne disease control, why have we not seen widespread increases in these diseases within the states that have banned trapping? Why aren't Washington, Colorado, and Arizona overrun with rabies, bubonic plague, and tularemia? The above information is easily accessible on the Internet. I urge everyone to check for themselves.

Let's not lose sight of why trapping needs to end. It is a cruel and inhumane activity. Montana is populated with kind, caring people who have a healthy appreciation and respect for their wilderness areas and the animals which inhabit them. It's long past time we join other western states in ending the practice of trapping.

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