

FOOTLOOSE MONTANA

Promoting trap-free public lands for people, pets & wildlife

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www.footloosemontana.org

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TRAPPED PET RELEASE WORKSHOP ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

Our next Trapped Pet Release Workshop is on Wednesday, December 10, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the large meeting room at the Missoula Public Library. Join us to learn about current trapping regulations, the kinds of traps used by commercial and recreational trappers and the legal placement of traps on our public lands.

Dani Silverman, a certified dog first aid instructor, will give a 25-minute-long presentation on CPR, trauma treatment and how to treat major injuries a dog might sustain from getting caught in a trap. In a hands-on part of the workshop, you will learn how to free your dog from various kinds of traps and snares. For those of you who are interested in learning more about dog first aid, there will be a sign-up sheet for a four-hour-long, in-depth class, taught by Dani tentatively on January 31, 2009.

MONTANA TRAPPING SEASON IS IN FULL SWING

Beginning December 1, all species that are considered “furbearers” can be trapped officially in the entire state of Montana. Furbearers are beaver, otter, muskrat, mink, bobcat, marten, fisher and wolverine (the season is closed for the trapping of lynx and swift fox). You can expect traps placed 30 feet from the centerline of public roads and 50 feet from trails, while body-gripping traps, including leghold traps and snares, can be set 300 feet from trailheads and lethal body-gripping traps such as the Conibear trap (designed to break an animal’s spine below the neck) and lethal snares can be set 1,000 feet from trailheads.

Remember to bring a muzzle for you to be prepared to prevent your dog from biting you should s/he get caught in a trap. Also, did you buy that pair of pliers to be able to cut a snare? It is a good idea to bring both muzzle and pliers on every hike during the winter and spring months.

Once again, if you come across traps or snares, please report the type of trap and exact location to Footloose Montana. Contact us at: info@footloosemontana.org. We will include the information on our website map (<http://footloosemontana.org>) to warn other recreationists about the potential dangers to companion animals in areas where traps have been spotted. Check out the locations of traps reported to us in 2007 and 2008 by clicking on “Map” on our homepage.

For an overview of trapping regulations, see the Footloose Montana newsletter for October 2008 at <http://www.footloosemontana.org/pdf/October%202008%20e-news.pdf>, check out our past newsletter archive at <http://www.footloosemontana.org/issue/archive%20stories.html>. To view the 2008 trapping regulations, click on Fish, Wildlife and Parks’ (FWP) website at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/content/getItem.aspx?id=35118> (this takes a

moment to download) or go to the FWP website at <http://fwp.mt.gov/default.html>, click on “Hunting,” then “Trapping” and “2008 Furbearer Regulations.”

THE TRUTH BEHIND TRAPPING: INTERVIEW WITH FORMER TRAPPER BILL RANDALL

Check out the interview conducted by wildlife consultant Camilla Fox with Bill Randall, a former government trapper and a licensed fur buyer in the 1970s and 80s, who eventually had a change of heart and in his later years, began to speak the truth about trapping; He talks about traps not being selective and his experience of catching many different species in traps, including “ducks, numerous blue herons and meadow hens, several owls, and even a few pregnant female mink”... and further states that, “It is not unusual to see just a muskrat’s foot in a steel trap...”

Asked about what made him decide to speak out against trapping, Randall says: “I’m not sure whether it was courage or rage that finally tipped the scales... The truth of traps and trapping is one that needs to be addressed more than ever before. It is time that we learn to love and have compassion for all things.” Read the entire interview at <http://www.footloosemontana.org/pdf/Truth%20behind%20trapping%201108.pdf>

WARNING FOR OUR ANACONDA MEMBERS: TRAP WAS SPOTTED!

For those of you who live and recreate in the Anaconda area, we received a report that a leghold trap was spotted in the Lost Creek Raceway area (Near the starting line) north of Warm Springs Creek. Also, a trapper is apparently going to put out snares in an area at the end of Stewart St. in Opportunity (Anaconda) on an old frontage road that ends .7 miles from the gate. It is possible (but not certain) that the trapper places a sign that reads “Live Animal Traps” at the gate.

LYNX DIED IN A CONIBEAR TRAP IN MAINE

On Nov. 17, a lynx was found dead in a trap that had been set for other species in Aroostook County in Maine.

Lynx are listed as “threatened” under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). The lynx had apparently climbed a tree that was standing inches away from the trap and became ensnared when it reached into the trap.

As a result of the incident, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife was ordered to change the trapping rules so that “trappers may set only so-called Conibear traps on trees no larger than 4 inches in diameter and at least four feet from any other larger trees, poles, other objects or banks. Additionally, any small leaning trees or leaning poles used with Conibear traps — also known as “body-gripper” or “killer-type” traps — must be at least 45 degrees to the ground at all points.”

“We believe the emergency rules are a farce,” said Camilla Fox, wildlife consultant with the Animal Welfare Institute. “I know of no other state that has such complicated regulations regarding Conibear traps. And if the trappers were perplexed by the [prior] regulations, they will be utterly confused now...”

The state did not change the current five-day trap check for Conibear traps in the Unorganized Territory. Five days is too long to ensure a trapped animal can be released alive, she [Fox] said. Check out the article at: <http://www.bangornews.com/detail/94599.html>

WE STILL NEED FUNDING FOR OUR DOG OWNER ALERT AD IN THE MISSOULIAN

On November 21, we send out a request for funding for our ad we have been placing in the Missoulian but unfortunately, we have not received any financial support for our inquiry (except for one kind member who has offered to pay for one week – thank you Mike!)

The reason we want to advertise is to educate as widely as we can to the public that recreates on our public lands. Trappers are not required to post signs in areas where they injure and kill our wildlife and our companion animals, so we've decided to make trap locations public as far as they are being reported to us.

The ad serves the purpose to warn fellow recreationists with dogs about the dangers that traps and snares pose to our companion animals while we are enjoying our public lands. It also raises awareness among other recreationists, including ice climbers, skiers, and families with kids, who will soon be out and about searching for that nice Christmas tree. Last but not least, it'll give Footloose Montana more exposure, may increase our membership and enhance the outreach of our mission.

Our hope is to run an ad every week with updated trap locations reported by to us by our members and other citizens, and we need you to help us raise the funds to do so.

A standing ad in the Missoulian costs us \$82.60 per week and running it for the next three months will amount to a total of about \$1,000.

Help us make our mission more visible to all of the outdoor Montana recreationists by donating toward our ad campaign. You can use our secure online PayPal account on our Footloose Montana website at <http://www.footloosemontana.org/join%20us/index.html> or send us a check to:
Footloose Montana, P.O. Box 1089, Florence, MT 59833.

Thank you for helping us to make our wildlife and companion animals safer while we enjoy the bounty of our beautiful public lands.

For a compassionate and footloose holiday season in 2008,
Your friends at Footloose Montana