

Independent, February 5, 2009

Floating some thoughts

If the cream rises, what floats to the bottom?

My good friend told me not to attack the individual that presents or defends their actions but to address the actions and explain the fault you see in these actions. It is a task that I am finding extremely difficult considering the disgusting nature and unnecessary suffering that this hideous hobby of trapping caused.

Trapper Don Bothwell is trying to tell us that because of the great pleasure animals are having while they are caught in the comfortable but tight jaws of a foothold trap, they decide to lay down and take a nap prior to the trapper coming along and either stomping, beating or shooting them to death. Their sleeping wouldn't have anything to do with the struggle and onset of exhaustion, would it? Oh! And you can't forget that this waiting period to die could last from hours to days since trappers in Montana are not required to check their traps in any specific period of time.

With little fanfare Bothwell's claim to fame is serving on the board of the Montana Furbearer Conservation Alliance. This is the same group that has organized the all-you-can-kill coyote huntathon/trapathon. Here comes the spin. Bothwell makes two statements that I find sadistically self-centered and serving: "We get to demonstrate our skills in a friendly manner," and "We are trying to help other game species," by killing all the coyotes he can. Gosh! In his second statement, Bothwell forgets to mention that all the animals he is saving from the big, bad coyotes he will be targeting later for killing by himself or others like him. What a good sport. No sense letting nature run her course like she has been doing since the beginning of time. We have the Montana Furbearer Conservation Alliance to the rescue.

Now for the cream! Footloose Montana sounds like an organization that promotes ethics in our relationship with nature, and does so without being deceptive or manipulative. It seems to have the wellbeing of backcountry visitors and their pets on public lands in mind. I don't know Susie Waldron, a Footloose Montana member, but I believe she has several positive points, one of which is that animals targeted for killing have a right to be here. I ask Bothwell this regarding the animals that trappers kill, whether targeted or not: Are their lives any less valuable to them than yours is to you or your offspring?

Marc Cooke

Stevensville