

Missoulian, March 17, 2009

Letters to the Editor

Research evidence lacking

I will give Bert Wustner credit for trying (letter, March 4). He puts forth claims regarding his favorite activity, trapping, and we at Footloose Montana soundly refute those statements with proven facts. He then conveniently ignores his previous statements and comes forth with a whole new batch of misinformation.

Unfortunately for him, we live in the information age. Urban legend, lore, and other historical misconceptions can easily be researched, sometimes within minutes.

After having his false claims about the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and National Wildlife Federation's positions regarding trapping discredited, he switched strategies. He now wants the public to view trappers as the last line of defense against the mighty beaver. He conveniently ignores, assuming he was aware of it in the first place, the huge role beavers and their dam-building play in the overall balance of a given ecosystem. He refers to a small number of incidents across the country, some poorly documented to begin with, over the last 60 years, in which beaver dam failure has caused flooding and injury. He attempts to gain support by inflating the threat posed to our companion animals by mountain lions, coyotes, etc. Yes, we have a concern for our pets' safety, but we don't need you to torture and kill everything in the woods to protect them. Thanks anyway.

The nerve required to claim that trapping is a sound wildlife conservation strategy is astounding. Trapping is cruel, indiscriminate and unlimited. As for the disease control claim, I will once again challenge Wustner to provide any credible research evidence to support this. These claims are blatantly false. I don't know how to state it any more clearly.

As for the central objection to trapping, which is cruelty, we have yet to hear a response from Wustner and his friends.

Tim Provow, Footloose Montana board member, Missoula