

April 2008

Our dog almost died in a trap on Sunday. We thank Footloose Montana, the Missoulian, and the Ravalli Republic for bringing the trapping issue front and center over the last year. We now think about traps whenever we go out and recreate and this is in part what helped save our dog, Frog.

We were mountain biking on a county road in Stevensville when Frog, who was not more than 15 feet from us, suddenly began to jump and panic. As he turned towards us, with his mouth wide open and clearly acting caught, we knew immediately he was trapped in a neck snare. We were at his side in a split second. One of us held Frog and tried to calm him since the snare was causing him to panic, and his gums and tongue were already turning blue from lack of oxygen. After a few heart wrenching moments, we were able to free the clasp on the snare and release our dog. He recovered quickly, but we did not!

We are so grateful for the Footloose Montana website, it's informational maps, and personal accounts. The information we gleaned from Footloose and trapping stories and editorials we read in the Missoulian and Ravalli Republic enabled us to know what we were dealing with and act swiftly. Had we not been so close to our dog and been able to act so fast, the outcome for Frog could have been far more tragic.

Although we now expect traps in our favorite recreation areas, finding one on a county road was a surprise. Anyone out walking, biking or horseback riding with dogs on their favorite dirt road on a nice spring day is at risk. We also learned there are no setback rules for traps on county roads like there are on federal or state lands. This trap, other than not being initialed, may have been a legal set, but our investigation continues.

Two Footloose Montana members from Stevensville, MT.