

Welcome everyone. My hope is that you and your family are well and safe. Chris and I are, and very optimistic as well. A little patience is always in order, and with little bit of time, improvements will reveal themselves. Now-a-days patience is not an attribute that most humans have. Because of what we know and do as fur hunters and trappers, having the patience of a set trap serves to go a long way. That's nothing new in our line of work.

My hope is that you have had the opportunity to get out and harvest some fur this past fall and winter. If not, there's still time. Returns for your pelts have seen better days, but you never really know what the market may want at any given time. Skunks in 2025 are the perfect example, and early 2026 state fur auctions show some nice numbers. Diversifying your trapline is like your investment portfolio. Some will always do better than others, but the safe bet is to have a little something of everything. As I write this, the trapping and fur hunting community are anticipating some great action at next week's Fur Harvesters Auction in North Bay.

Max Lorge and the website (www.ndfhta.com) keeps you informed between newsletters. I'll close with a reminder to keep your membership current, so you don't miss any of the association's activities and information. Please consider volunteering for any of the leadership positions or helping with an activity. Until next time, God bless You and God Bless America!

Respectfully, Rick Tischaefter

2026 Summer Rendezvous

The summer rendezvous is a family and friends' event and will be held on Saturday June 20, 2026, at the Velva Wildlife Club. Velva Wildlife Club sits on 52 acres of Mouse River bottomland three miles west of Velva on Hwy. 52. The club is a multi-activity location that includes an education facility, rifle range, 3 house trap shooting range, 3 bag target archery range, 23 target 3D archery range, and a new catch and release pond stocked with northern pike. The archery ranges and fishing pond will be open during our rendezvous. The river bottomland provides a variety of habitats which make it a great place for education classes and demonstrations. Primitive camping exists on the grounds, and Ceder Lodge (701-338-3080) in Velva has both motel rooms and hook-ups for campers. Velva also has a city park which has camping.

Demonstrations – if you have something you'd like to see, do, or help with, please let me know. **We need suggestions!** It's hard to put together a schedule when you're not sure what folks want to see. We've tried to provide what's current with the fur market and with the feedback, we've done very well. The folks doing the demonstrations were outstanding and appreciated by those who were on the receiving end. Have an idea? Share it!

Auction Items – we are always in need of new, slightly used, and used items for our auction. Past auctions have been a blend of stand-up comedy and opportunities for a deal or two. Auctioneer Phil does an amazing job for everyone. In all honesty, it is an important event that benefits the association and the education program. Items that have already been donated include traps, trapping equipment, and pelt drying frames. There is always a need for more, so please donate and attend this enjoyable event!

Vendors – are welcome and vendor space is free. It doesn't always have to be about trapping – folks have many interests, and you never know what that may be until you set up as a vendor. Let me know if you'll need space or have any questions or special needs.

Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held during our summer rendezvous on Saturday, June 20, 2026. The meeting will begin at 12:30 PM. The location is the Velva Wildlife Club, Velva, North Dakota.

Keep Your Membership Current

Make it a point to renew your membership when you get your first notice. Waiting for an event to renew your membership may result in you missing some critical information. The difference between your last renewal date and the next association event may be several months, causing not only missed issues of Trappers Post, but association notices or newsletter, a survey, or other important information. Take care of it right away and avoid the void. Another option is to consider a Lifetime Membership – which solves all the renewal problems!

Election Cycle

The positions of President (Rick Tischaefter), Treasurer (Phil Mastrangelo) and Directors for Districts 2 (Bob Lee) and 4 (Steve Reimer) are up for election in 2026. Names for any nominations or volunteers for these positions should be brought to my attention by May 1, 2026. Please consider helping.

2026 North Dakota Game & Fish Department Special Allocation Big Game Drawing

The North Dakota Century Code provides a special allocation big game license lottery for qualified non-profit organizations which are federal tax exempt under IRS Code 501(c). North Dakota Game & Fish Department manages the application process and conducts the lottery drawing. Successful applicants may be awarded a license to be used as a fundraiser, with a portion of the proceeds used for a conservation or education project. We apply every year for this opportunity but have yet to be selected. We submitted our 2026 application in early December and were notified in January that we were again unsuccessful.

North Dakota Cooperative Education Program

Our 2026 calendar has many activities where you can help or attend. Here is what we know so far:

April

TBD NDSU-Fargo Wildlife Society Chapter Fur Harvester Education Course, Fargo, North Dakota
25 Delta Waterfowl Fur Harvester Education Course

May

4-8 Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Northwest Fur School, Lewiston, Idaho

June

20 NDFHTA Summer Rendezvous, Velva Wildlife Club

July

16 State Fair Trapping Booth Set Up, Minot
17-25 State Fair, Conservation Park in Minot
26 State Fair Trapping Booth Take Down, Minot

August

TBD Fur Harvester Education Course in Bismarck

- 4 North Dakota Wildlife Federation Kids Outdoor Summer Camp, Washburn
- 8 Youth Day at the Velva Wildlife Club
- 24-28 Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Upper Midwest Fur School, Dubois, Wyoming
- 27 Youth Night Out at the State Fair Conservation Park in Minot

September

10-12 UND-Grand Forks Wildlife Program Fur Harvester Education Course, Larimore, North Dakota

October

- 1-3 Fur Harvester Education Course, Velva Wildlife Club
- 10 Using Cables Devices in North Dakota Seminar, Velva Wildlife Club

Wild Outdoor Women – North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department hosted a Wild Outdoor Women winter event at Lake Metigoshe State Park near Bottineau on February 6 - 8. We are fortunate to participate in and sponsor a fur handling session for 10 ladies. We have our complete pelt collection of North Dakota furbearers and talk about each of them. The ladies then skin, flesh, and board a muskrat and a raccoon. They can take their work home and send it to a tannery when it is dry. The carcass muskrats and raccoons were donated by Chris Tischaefter, Butte and Lane Pederson from Cando.



The WOW fur shed.

Using Cable Devices in North Dakota – This seminar includes everything from cable device construction to actual field setting of both restraining and lethal devices, checking sets, ethics and responsibility, and detailed information for targeting different furbearers. Reservations are required so let me know if you are interested.

Donations – we are always looking for carcass animals for our education classes, pelt collections, or handled so that they generate a little revenue for the education program. We also receive requests from schools looking for pelts throughout the year. Let me know if you can help. Education program donations to date include:

- Rich Olson, Ruso – 2 carcass raccoon
- Chris Tischaefter, Butte – 4 carcass coyotes

Volunteer Help for State Fair - We need a volunteer or two to set up our trapping booth at the state fair and once the fair is over, taking down and storing the equipment and displays until next year. The set up occurs on Thursday before the fair begins and the take-down is done Sunday morning after the fair closes. It is not difficult; it just requires a few hours on each of those days. If you are interested, please let me know.

Education Program Tanned Pelts for Sale – we currently have some nice coyote pelts for anyone interested. The funds generated from these pelt sales go directly to our education program. Max Lorge (our website master) has posted them on our website at www.ndfhta.com.

Correspondence Course - We offer a correspondence course for individuals to complete our fur harvester education class for certification. This is another option for individuals who may be unable to attend the full 16-hour course currently offered. Individuals can contact the North Dakota Game & Fish Department Outdoor Education Office (701) 328-6300, NDGFD website, or me to enroll. Participants will be required to satisfactorily complete the chapters of our student manual and attend an 8-hour field day for certification. Field days will include hands-on training with equipment and satisfactorily complete the authentic assessments included in the student manual.

Fourth Edition Education Manual – Work continues with the fourth edition of our education manual. Our timeline suggests that it will be printed and ready for the 2026 education season. Our last membership survey indicated a photo of a mink should adorn the cover of this edition. The cover photo was selected from several photos provided by trapper Steve Silseth of Minot.



Mink photo for the cover of fourth edition education manual.

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Video Productions - AFWA, USDA-Wildlife Services, and our education program worked together to produce a series of R3 and educational videos. Check them out at <https://www.furbearermangement.com>

Marten Harvest Opportunity

Our long-awaited marten harvest opportunity will occur with the 2026 harvest season. Marten will be incorporated with the annual fisher season that occurs the week following the close of the deer gun season and will follow the same rules. Attend a spring advisory board meeting to hear more and voice your support.