

Greetings to everyone and I hope that the beginning of summer is treating you well. As always, we are busy as ever promoting the benefits of modern regulated fur hunting and trapping. Being on the offense, making connections, working together, and gaining ground when times are relatively quiet is proactive and strategic. The limiting factor with all of this is that we are short volunteers for this very important effort. It is our future that we're talking about, and we need your help to ensure there is a future.

How can you help? Encourage a friend or relative to sign up as a new member (or returning member), volunteer to help at events, move some raffle tickets, donate, maybe become a fur harvester education instructor, or take an assisting or leading role in one of the many leadership positions in the association. Everyone is good at something – let's find your niche and help the association and our future along the way.

There isn't much to be said about current fur market conditions. Unfortunately, these conditions will remain for the next several years. A bright spot is American ingenuity and the will to be successful as an entrepreneur. We have a couple of those great Americans as member/vendors at our summer rendezvous who have taken a step forward and learned something new to develop their own markets. It can be done if you have the will to do it, and they'll show you how it has worked for them.

While I know that fur hunter and trapper activity is largely based on returns, there are other reasons many of us continue to do one or both when markets would dictate otherwise. It is in our heart, it is our passion, we know our activity provides benefits, planning for next season comprises all our off-season time, and death is usually the only way we won't be fur hunting or trapping every year. I will always tell you to fur hunt or trap at every opportunity your life will give you. It is important for the resource and for your soul. You can always share what you know to prepare our future generations.

Here are some highlights for you.

Summer Rendezvous

The summer rendezvous is a family and friends' event being held on Saturday June 24th 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 rainbow trout. 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 (yep, that's the way it is spelled) Lodge (701-338-3080) in Velva has both motel rooms and hook-ups for campers. Velva also has a city park which has camping.

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. In all honesty, it is an important event that benefits the association and the education program. Items that have already been donated include rifle scopes; reloading equipment and books; traps; trapping equipment; and hard and soft water fishing equipment. There is always a need for more, so please donate and attend this enjoyable event!

Vendors – are welcome and vendor space is free. Let me know if you have any questions or special needs. Right now, we have Volk Furs (Garrett Volk), Krebs Kustom Furs (Kyle Krebs), and Trapline Beard Oil LLC (Bryan Watson).

2023 Annual Raffle

The 2023 annual raffle drawing will be held at noon on September 5th in Bismarck, ND. Tickets will be distributed at the summer rendezvous and mailed to those members who would like to sell or purchase their own. We need your help! The annual raffle is a major source of income for our association and the funds help us fulfill our mission of “Preserving Our Heritage and Securing Our Future.”

There are six prizes: Beretta A300 Ultima Semi-Auto 12 ga. Shotgun; Kimber Custom LW 1911 .45 ACP Semi-Auto pistol; Ruger American .243 Rifle with a Vortex Crossfire 3-9x40 scope; Glock G43X Gen 5 9mm Luger Semi-Auto pistol; \$300 Visa gift card; and a \$200 Visa gift card. These are some very nice prizes! Raffle tickets are priced at \$5 each or 5 for \$20.

Chris Tischaefter handles the distribution of tickets and is the person to mail your stubs and money. Chris can be contacted at (701) 626-7150 (leave a message if needed) and the mailing address for the ticket stubs and money is “NDFHTA, PO Box 334, Butte, ND 58723”.

Annual Furbearer Workgroup Meeting

The annual furbearer workgroup meeting was held on May 3rd, 2023. The meeting notes are 14 pages and is a separate file posted on the webpage. It was another good meeting and a great deal of information traded hands. We appreciate the fact that North Dakota Game & Fish Department hosts these important meetings with us.

Tanned Pelts for Sale

They make great wall hangings, personal displays, and conversation pieces. The proceeds from the sale of the finished pelts are for our education program. Pelts were tanned by Sleepy Creek Tannery in Iowa; are case skinned; and include feet. Bobcats are \$125, river otter \$100, and fisher \$80. There are a couple of otters without feet that are \$80. Contact me if you’d like to purchase any of these pelts. Remember – it’s for our education program! Howard D. Peterson (a member from New England, ND) returned a nice note with his check for a river otter that said, “Beautiful Otter Pelt”.

In Closing

Chris and I look forward to seeing you at the rendezvous. Please make the time to attend and bring your family and friends. You are why we put in the time and effort to get together once a year and learn, enjoy each other’s company, share ideas and information, and support the association. We have a day schedule that includes some excellent demonstrations by our very skilled and experienced members.

Respectfully, Rick Tischaefter