

President's Report –

Welcome to the best time of the year! Just a few things to cover:

Our annual raffle drawing was held on September 4th at the AMVETS Post in Bismarck. Phil Mastrangelo and I were there to take care of business. Many thanks to everyone who returned their tickets, sold additional tickets, returned their tickets with an additional donation, and some returns with appreciative notes and letters. The drawing results were: first prize was Ben Schaaf of Mandan, ND; second prize was Arnie Ostgarden of Detroit Lakes, MN; third prize was Doreen Schmitt (Gerald's better half) from New Ulm, MN; fourth prize was DJ Randolph of Velva, ND; fifth prize was Pete Stollenwerk of Fargo, ND; and sixth prize was Sarah Pederson of Cando, ND. Thanks to Phil Mastrangelo, Janice Paulson, and Chris Tischaefter for the bookwork and record keeping duties.

If you'd like to donate one or more carcass animals from trapping season this year, we've got a use for them. The animals will be used in future fur harvester education classes and fur handling events. Animals should be in good condition and preferably double bagged, compressed, and frozen. Arrangements can be made ahead of time by letting me know. Thanks in advance! A special thank you to Ben Schaaf for donating 15 finished coyote pelts and Lane Pederson for donating one carcass mink recently to the education program.

The fall advisory board meetings will be towards the end of November and early December. Keep an eye on the Game and Fish website for the schedule and attend if you can.

We have one more fur harvester education course scheduled for 3 – 5 October at the Velva Wildlife Club near Velva. If you are interested in attending, go to the Game & Fish website for more information and enroll under the Hunter Safety tab.

We've changed the date for the "Using Cable Devices in North Dakota" class to October 19th at the Velva Wildlife Club. Same time, just one Saturday in October later than initially scheduled. Contact me for a reservation to attend the course.

Written permission is required for trapping or using cable devices on private property of another (including PLOTS). An interesting question came up recently – does an electronic record like an email or text message suffice for documenting written permission. In checking with the North Dakota Game & Fish Department Bureau of Law Enforcement, it does.

We had an information article in the last two issues of the Dakota Skinner regarding bobcats in North Dakota. Thank you to everyone who has responded

and a reminder there is still time to let me know how you feel. A simple text or email will work just fine.

We were successful in having the Turtle Mountain fisher trapping restricted area reduced in size to just Hwy's 14, 5 and 30. Thank you to the folks at Game & Fish for making that happen. That single item was the only improvement to the trapping regulations for this year.

We were able to construct 50 hair snare cubbies for the marten project in the Turtle Mountains and provide the researchers with support equipment and lure. This type of hair snare is open at both ends and uses metal brushes to snag hair from the marten as it enters or travels through the cubby. The previous version was closed at one end and used glue strips to capture hair. Reports so far indicate the new cubbies are working as intended, and that even black bears like them – well maybe not the cubby, just the grape jelly used as an attractant. I'll have more information in the next issue of Dakota Skinner, so stay tuned.

We need a volunteer to set up our trapping booth at the state fair and once the fair is over, storing all the equipment until next year. Set up occurs on Thursday before the fair begins and take down is done Sunday morning after the fair closes. It is not difficult, just requires a few hours on each of those days. If you are interested, or have more questions, please let me know.

On to better things - the most important time of the year is upon us. Take the time to be prepared, both mentally and physically, and have your equipment ready to perform as needed. You need to be a risk manager on your trap line every day of every season. Risk management is weighing what is good and productive against what is bad and would be unproductive. Being in the news or appearing on a newspaper headline with an incident that has a negative impact on what we do would be a risk. You are in charge; you are responsible; and what you do affects us all. Using risk management won't control everything, but it will control what we can control. Know what risk is; assess your line for risk every day; and do everything to avoid risk. If we all use risk management, we will have a very uneventful season regarding negative news.

Some things to keep in mind as the trapping seasons approach –

- Remember to have your written permission and have it with you;
- Keep your sets away from domestic animal or human contact;
- Save time by marking your trails, runs, and set locations while out hunting or scouting;
- Run your line in both directions – you'd be surprised at what you missed from the other direction;
- Check, check, and check your traps and equipment so it's serviceable and in top condition;

- Animal welfare deserves the highest priority – use the appropriate equipment and be timely with your trap checks;
- Work with your wildlife and fisheries managers, conservation wardens, and report violations.
- When working on private property, make sure the land is posted.

The gauge of a professional trapper is not who traps the most, handles more animals, or who has been trapping the longest. A professional trapper is a trapper who obeys the laws, shares their knowledge, continues to improve themselves through education, and serves to promote the activity by being responsible and ethical.

I cannot express the importance of taking the time to vote in the upcoming election. Nationally, comparing '16 to '20 and '20 to '24 makes it an easy decision. If you have a flat tire, no need to drive around on it for another four years to see if it improves. Here in North Dakota, Kelly Armstrong has always been our friend and has no problem saying so. Merrill is a very nice gentleman as I have spoken with him often while testifying during the legislative sessions. I have no experience with Merrill and how he personally feels about trapping or fur hunting.

Enjoy your time in the field and marshes this fall and take the time to thank a veteran for the freedoms we enjoy. Veterans Day is November 11. Remember to keep your membership current so you stay informed. Until next time, take care and be safe. God bless! Rick