

President's Report –

Legislative Session - We continue to monitor the legislative session daily. There are some bills that involve the Game and Fish Department, which can be viewed on a tracker page from their website (gf.nd.gov) It is too early in the legislative season to relax. Constant vigilance, from the first day to the last, is required during our legislative sessions. We are fortunate to have a mandated 90-day session every other year, and there is no change needed. The legislatures in many other states are year-round, requiring 24/7/365 monitoring. It's good to be in North Dakota.

Eternal Vigilance – Relationships are one of the tools that allow us to survive and do what we love. A statement made by a friend one day included “it's not what you know, but who you know”. Regardless of how you feel about those words, that statement is a fact. A recent example of this reveals the importance of these relationships, and my appreciation extends to Jordan Sillars and Steve Rinella at Meateater (www.themeateater.com), our members, and the many contacts that when all connected, created a force of reckoning. Jim and Steve put a majority of the story on their website at www.themeateater.com/conservation/wildlife-management/meateater-obtains-leaked-letter-asking-biden-to-ban-beaver-trapping. Check it out. Bottom line is that we were able to responsibly participate in action against a low-life and irresponsible attempt at usurping our profession and wildlife management. Know that much more information traded hands than what was included in the article, and which may be used at the appropriate time in the future. I've attached a copy of the left leaning whacko's letter asking the President to use the authority of an executive order to ban beaver trapping on federal lands. There is no limit to their shameful behavior, and so requiring our eternal vigilance.

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 10 - 12. We participated and sponsored a fur handling session for 10 ladies. Each had the opportunity to skin, flesh, and board a muskrat and a mink. It is something they took home with them and will be tanned after the pelts are dry. The comments at the end of the day expressed appreciation and thankful for the opportunity we provided. The education program has helped with this event for several years, with Stephanie and Chad Tucker teaching muskrat and beaver handling. A special thank you for their years as instructors.

Donations – we are always looking for carcass animals for our education classes. The Great Plains Fur School will be needing raccoons. Let me know if you can help. Donations to date include: 3 carcass raccoons and 3 coyote pelts from Chris Tischaeyer; and 12 carcass muskrats from Lane Pederson.

Tanned Pelts for Sale – last spring we held our first Great Plains Fur School “You Do It” Fur Handling Day. The folks who attended skinned, fleshed, and boarded many river otters, fishers, and bobcats. Much work was done, but many river otter, fisher, and bobcats remained, which were finished in my shop. Those pelts were tanned and are available for sale. They make great wall hangings, personal displays, and conversation pieces. The proceeds from the sale of the finished pelts are dedicated to 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. Contact me if you'd like to purchase any of these pelts. Remember – it's for our education program!







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 Cedar (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.

Demonstrations – let us know what you'd like to see. The habitat and facilities at the Velva Wildlife Club will suit just about anything. Make your suggestions known so we can plan for some excellent demonstrations.

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.

Vendors – are welcome and vendor space is free. Let me know if you have any questions or special needs.

Election Cycle - The positions of Vice President (Travis Leier), Secretary (Chris Tischaefter) and Directors for Districts 1 (Garrett Volk - NW) and 3 (Chris Flann - SE) are up for election in 2023. If you or someone you know is interested in serving in one of these capacities, you may nominate them for a position. Please check with them beforehand to insure they are interested. All nominations must be received by April 31 of this year and can be mailed to "NDFHTA", PO Box 334, Butte, ND 58723. Kyle Krebs (District 4 Director - SW) would also like to step down as his family is growing and priorities are changing. This would be a mid-term appointment by the Board of Directors. A District Director maintains the lines of communication with the membership and the association, works with other Board members on matters between membership meetings, and takes care of events within the respective district. If you are interested, please let me know as soon as possible.

Although printed before, these words serve as a reminder for all. Many of our officers and directors have been in leadership positions for quite some time or have returned to them out of necessity. Like other entities – townships, churches, schools, and similar associations or organizations struggle with finding folks for their leadership positions. A position of leadership should not be a life sentence. Our association is blessed with members who are talented, skilled, and passionate about our future. Consider helping when and where you can.

Annual Meeting - Our annual meeting will be held during our summer rendezvous on Saturday, June 24, 2023. The meeting will begin at 12:30 PM. The location is the Velva Wildlife Club, Velva, North Dakota.

Fur Industry Blues - The fur industry will not improve until retail sales increase. Poor or non-existent sales of finished products is the plug at the end of the production pipeline. Retail sales are dependent upon a healthy economy that spans the globe. Right now, too much trouble exists with events in Russia, China, Ukraine, Europe, and here at home. The fur industry has had to experience and weather cycles like these many times in the last four centuries. What to do in times like these? Continue to trap and fur hunt within your means – wildlife, furbearer health, and efforts to maintain

balance depend on it. Look at niche markets that involve crafts or personal use items. Practice using different equipment or techniques to improve your catches (or dismiss those that do not) so you're ready when conditions do improve. Most important, stay positive and continue to support this important activity.

Fur handling question of the month - If I'm trapping muskrat and beaver in the spring, at what point should I stop due to diminishing pelt value? There are two indicators – the first is bite marks, and you'll see those when you remove the pelt from the carcass. The second is shedding, and you can determine that by pinching a small amount of guard hairs from the center of the back and slightly tugging on them. If you end up with guard hairs between your fingers, the shedding process has begun. After ice out, muskrats are usually good for about 10 – 14 days; beaver may stretch things out about three weeks. Conditions do vary, so you'll need to be observant.

That's about it for now. Let me know if you'd like to purchase any of the tanned pelts we have – again, for our education program. Remember to keep your membership current and be informed. As we go about our business calling or trapping, consider sharing your travels and experiences with someone who has yet to know these activities. Fur hunt and trap as much as you can. You will run out of years before you run out of the love you have for it. Until next time, take care, be safe and responsible, and enjoy what Mother Nature and North Dakota have to offer.

Respectfully, Rick Tischaefter