



Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee

Chair: Doug Vincent-Lang (Alaska)

Vice-Chair: Dave Kay (Alberta)

Wednesday, March 27th, 2024

1:00 AM – 4:00 PM (EDT)

[89th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference](#)

Committee Charge:

Advocate the North American Model of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and promote the sustainable use of fish and wildlife resources at the international level.

Subcommittees and Working Groups:

U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group

Meeting Minutes

- **Agenda review, adjustments, and opening comments (Ryan Scott, Alaska DFG)**
 - Acting Chair Ryan Scott opened the meeting
 - Agenda adjustments were made
- **Introductions**
 - **51 guests and members attended the meeting** representing 14 State fish and wildlife agencies, 2 regional Associations, 2 U.S. Federal agencies, 1 Canadian Federal Agency, and 8 NGO organizations.
- **Approval of Minutes from the previous meeting**
 - Vote of Acclamation: A motion to approve the minutes from the meeting during the AFWA Annual Meeting was made by acting chair Ryan Scott and unanimously carried by membership present. **Vote of acclamation with unanimous consent carries.**
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- **USFWS NWR System BIDEH Policy (Gordon Batcheller, NEAFWA)**
 - BIDEH = Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health
 - Changes were made in 2001 to the 1977 Refuge Improvement Act and AFWA assisted with those changes
 - Revisions are being made again through a federal register request which came out on 2/2/24 with only a 30-comment period

- AFWA and others asked for an extension to comment; so 60 additional days were granted (4/6/24)
- AFWA will comment with official correspondence and asks that agencies and member NGOs comment as well. Many NGOs that do not support predator management have responded.
 - Primary concerns involve 1) appropriate use of agriculture on in the NWR system, and 2) policy on predator control (predation is a behavior, not a taxon), term is not defined but large carnivores are likely referred to; could effect waterfowl management, and 3) does not adequately address state fish and wildlife agency authority and interests. The policy on predator control will place a huge burden on staff and will make such activity extremely difficult to employ.
 - Alaska commented that there are lots of refuge lands in the state and this new policy could have a significant impact on the hunting public.
 - The new policy changes could also affect the ability of agencies to manage fish and wildlife at the landscape scale, as NWRs are within the bounds of state management and should be managed accordingly
 - Stay tuned to this issue by joining the AFWA weekly government affairs virtual meetings
- **Science Brief on Predator Management (Bryant)**
 - Pat Jackson (Nevada Dept. of Wildlife, Predator Specialist) provided an update on the Science Brief on Predator Management. This brief is being developed by several authors in conjunction with the AFWA Furbearer Conservation Working Group and the AFWA Resident Game Bird Conservation Working Group.
 - A draft is expected by early summer and will be circulated for review to the 1) SUWC and 2) other groups with interest, following the SUWC review.
 - The Brief will discuss how predator management is a crucial tool utilized by state, tribal, and federal fish and wildlife agencies in the United States to maintain ecological balance and support biodiversity. This brief will advocate for the responsible and strategic use of predator management measures to safeguard vulnerable species, preserve ecosystem health, and ensure sustainable wildlife populations.
- **Potential AFWA Resolution on Predator Management (Ryan Scott, Alaska DFG)**
 - The AFWA SUW Committee will develop a resolution in support of predator management. Many members in the room voiced support for developing the resolution
 - The resolution should be completed with a thorough review by the SUW Committee by mid-July. A draft will be circulated to the SUW Committee members.
 - The resolution will need to be submitted to the Resolutions Committee (per Tim McCoy tim.mccoy@nebraska.gov and Lane Kisonak lkisonak@fishwildlife.org) no later than mid-August (sooner is better to allow the Resolutions Committee time to review the proposal, suggest changes and then provide notice to Directors)
- **Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow Program (Dave Windsor)**
 - **Primary Educational Goal is:**
 - “to provide future and current leaders of the natural resources profession with an understanding of the diverse values & important roles of hunting and its impact on conservation to ensure that hunting is considered a relevant and important component of wildlife conservation; not by creating more hunters but by creating a conservation

workforce aware of the history, values, roles, and future of hunting in wildlife conservation”

- **Primary Objective:**

- “to provide future and current leaders of the natural resources profession with an understanding of the diverse values & important roles of hunting and its impact on conservation to ensure that hunting is considered a relevant and important component of wildlife conservation; not by creating more hunters but by creating a conservation workforce aware of the history, values, roles, and future of hunting in wildlife conservation”

- **Progress:**

- Since inception of CLFT in 2005, we have conducted 160 Workshops and 35 online cohorts reaching over 3000 individuals. Includes participation from 42 state agencies, 5 federal agencies, 5 NGOs and 55 Universities

- **Conservation Partners:**

- Since 2012 we have maintained “Cooperative Agreements” with each of the four Regional Associations where state agencies can opt in to participate in our programs
- We do not consider our relationship a “business/ customer” relationship

- **Program Summary for 2022-2023**

- 5 online cohorts
- 7 in-person workshops
- 4 locations
- 28 states and the USFWS
- 147 professional participants

- **2023-2024 Season**

- 8 in-person workshops
- 4 locations
- 3+ - online cohorts
- 28 State Agencies
- 2 Federal Agencies
- 1 NGO
- 187 registered participants

- **CLFT Guidance Committee – 2023-2026**

- David Buggs – Texas Parks and Wildlife (Past Participant)
- Tim Beck – Indiana DNR/ HE (Instructor)
- Sarah Fleming – Ducks Unlimited (Instructor)
- Leo Miranda-Castro – C w/o C, USFWS Retired (Instructor)
- Jamie Nack – Univ of Wisconsin –Madison (Instructor)
- Robert Boyle – South Carolina DNR – (Director)
- Bob Byrne – Bob Byrne Consulting (Instructor)
- (May add individuals on an as needed basis)

- **Guidance Committee**

- The Guidance Committee will serve several functions.
- Most importantly, they will serve as the connection to your agency and organization’s needs. They will provide needs assessment, curriculum/ program review, experiential learning options, and make equipment and resource upgrade recommendations.
- Although this committee will not set policy, they will ensure that the knowledge and skills delivered through our programs align with the needs of the conservation workforce. Their work will help CLFT staff make wise decisions, resulting in the best education program for the natural resource agency professional.

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- **New Report on Economic Impacts of Hunting and Target Shooting (Ben Scuderi, Southwick Associates)**
 - This report will be available in June 2024 and highlights that the fishing, hunting and shooting industries create economic benefits like other businesses
 - Highlights
 - U.S. anglers' spend (\$99,422,000,000) each year on fishing which is more than the revenue generated by U.S mining companies
 - Hunters spent (\$45,221,000,000) which is more in 2022 than the revenue of Coca-Cola
 - Target shooters spent (\$61,177,000,000) which is 3x the revenue of General Mills in 2022
 - The number of jobs supported by anglers is 2x the number of employees of the air travel industry
 - Spending by hunters supported more jobs than Target has employees
 - National, state & congressional district results to be produced & sent to all states, posted online
- **Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Partner with a Payer update (Tom Decker, USFWS)**
 - WSFR recently changed its name to the **Office of Conservation Investment**
 - Administer, manage and oversee the allocation and appropriate use of WSFR funds **totaling over \$1.6 billion annually.**
 - Provide **Service-wide financial assistance support** and oversight through our FASO team and GrantSolutions. Also leads State/Federal Task Force on Financial Assistance Policy.
 - Issue/interpret guidance/policy/regulations
 - Conduct recipient and administrative audits
 - Collect and report on program performance (TRACS)
 - Manage **over a dozen grant programs accounting for over 3,000 funding agreements a year** with our state and organization partners. Each agreement advances stewardship and the Service's mission.
 - The report highlighted the **2022 Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation:**
 - **2024 Addendum Report Topics will include:**
 - Recruitment and Retention of Hunters and Anglers in the United States
 - Target Shooting in the United States: Participation, Demographics and Relationship with Hunting and Angling
 - Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis
 - Economic Contributions of Wildlife Watching in the United States
 - Participation and Expenditure Patterns of African American, Asian Americans, Hispanic, and Female Hunters and Anglers
 - A Demographic Expenditure Examination of Boating in the United States
 - Demographic and Economic Expenditures of Paid Access Hunting on Public vs. Private Land in the United States
 - Demographic and Economic Expenditures for Big-Game Hunting in the United States
 - Since 2016, facility tours and field tours for approximately 737 industry, state, and federal partners
 - 49 events hosted by Industry Partners and State and Federal Fish & Wildlife Agencies
 - 91 articles published about WSFR benefits and their link to excise taxes
 - 34 Videos produced and distributed about WSFR partnerships
 - The program is also developing new welcoming signage that acknowledges excise tax contributors

- For more information see partnerwithapayer.org

- **Safari Club International (Chris Tymeson)**

- Summary: SCI, and partners such as Sportsmen’s Alliance Foundation and the National Rifle Association, continue to defend sustainable use and hunting access in courts around the U.S. We have seen trends in plaintiffs challenging predator management efforts, especially State efforts to control large populations of wolves and bears. We have also seen mounting challenges to the use of traditional lead ammunition. (We oppose these lawsuits as restrictions on hunting access, without a clear link between negative impacts of lead usage in a specific hunting area and without additional development of alternative ammunition to lead.) We are also involved in two cases challenging Endangered Species Act (ESA) delistings, which reflect a significant problem with moving large carnivores back to State management.
- Gray wolf delisting: In February 2022, a California federal district court vacated the 2020 removal of gray wolves across the Lower 48 United States from the ESA lists of endangered and threatened species. The court’s decision was appealed. That appeal has been on hold, with the expectation that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) would conduct a status review of wolves and issue a new delisting rule by February 2, 2024. That date passed, and the USFWS did not issue a nation-wide status review or delisting rule. Instead, the USFWS issued a decision denying two petitions to re-list wolves in the Rocky Mountains and West Coast. The wolf delisting appeal is about to be reopened, with a briefing schedule, that will ultimately decide whether that 2020 delisting rule is valid or violates the ESA and Administrative Procedure Act.
- Separately, the USFWS was sued for two ESA violations: (1) failure to conduct a status review of the gray wolf and (2) failure to develop a national recovery plan for the gray wolf. The USFWS settled that case with the promise to develop a nationwide recovery plan for gray wolves. The USFWS is proceeding to prepare this plan—despite the fact it has for almost a decade now been trying to delist gray wolves in the Lower 48.
- The USFWS has also contracted with an organization to conduct a conflict transformation dialogue about wolves (gray, red, and Mexican) across the Lower 48. That is a three-year conversation that is intended to help give voice to the concerns of various stakeholders.
- Louisiana black bear delisting: A group of plaintiffs challenged the 2016 delisting of the Louisiana black bear. SCI successfully intervened to defend the delisting and obtained a dismissal of the case from a federal court in DC. However, the plaintiffs refiled in Louisiana. At the end of January 2024, the district court issued a ruling that dismissed the plaintiffs’ challenge, and affirmed the USFWS’ conclusions in the delisting rule.
- Separately but at the same time, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has proposed a conservative bear hunt (~10 permits), to be held in December 2024. This will be the first bear hunt in Louisiana since the 1980s. The Commission took public comments on proposed Notice of Intent (NOI) to open the hunt. They will consider that NOI again at their next Commission meeting. Public support for the hunt has been strong, and we anticipate the Commission will ultimately approve it.
- Lead ammo and tackle on National Wildlife Refuges: The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) previously challenged the 2020 Hunt Fish Rule, which expanded hunting and fishing on over 2 million acres of National Wildlife Refuges across the U.S. The case was settled by CBD and the USFWS in 2021, with the USFWS agreeing to respond to CBD’s petition to phase out the use of lead ammunition and tackle across the National Wildlife Refuge System. In early June 2022, the USFWS denied CBD’s petition for a national ban

or phase-out of lead ammo but stated that it will consider restrictions on lead ammo and fishing tackle on specific refuges. In the 2023 Hunt Fish Rule, the USFWS proposed regulations to phase-out the use of lead ammo and tackle on eight refuges in Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Virginia as of 2026. In the meantime, three groups have sued the USFWS in federal court in DC to challenge the 2022 Hunt Fish Rule, which declined to pledge to phase-out the use of lead ammo on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge in West Virginia after the State objected to this plan. SCI, Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation, and the NRA successfully intervened to defend the USFWS' decision and deference to the State. That case is currently on hold. The USFWS has acquired additional acreage for the Refuge. It is proposing to open hunting on this acreage, but also phase out the use of lead ammo on this acreage as well as across the Refuge. The takeaway is we should expect additional restrictions on lead ammo and tackle in the upcoming 2024 Hunt Fish Rule.

- Colorado mountain lion petition: A group is seeking to ban "trophy hunting" of mountain lions, lynx, and bobcat in Colorado by a ballot initiative that would be voted on in 2024. The group defines "trophy hunting" as any hunting of these animals, with a specific focus on hunting with dogs. Opponents have succeeded in amending the ballot initiative title to take the word "trophy" out of it, and the proponents have begun to collect signatures in support of the initiative and to publish a number of op-eds and LTEs—including a "conversation with a mountain lion—in the Colorado press.
 - Additionally, SCI's Government Affairs Federal, State and Local Teams work in Congress, Statehouses and with Wildlife Departments across the United States affecting wildlife, conservation and firearms policy. Recently, efforts have focused on carnivores/predators and commission makeup.
 - Great Lakes Wolves: A new grassroots organization has started in northern Minnesota in response to a steady or slightly increasing population of wolves and a decline in deer numbers, coupled with a perceived lack of response by the government and the Legislature. SCI addressed 200 plus individuals on the issue in February at the Minnesota SCI Exposition.
 - Western Legislative and Regulatory Action-Carnivores: Washington's Commission continues to take aim at bear and cougar seasons, disregarding the Agency's scientific experts in the field. A coyote contest ban petition was presented to the Nevada Wildlife Commission and subsequently withdrawn when it became clear that the petition would not pass. SCI filed comments recently supporting Wyoming bear and mountain lion seasons, California bear hunting at the Commission, Montana Grizzly Bear hunting (should they be delisted) and Montana wolf hunting at the Commission and on Arizona hunt guidelines in support of predator hunting.
 - Eastern Legislative and Regulatory Action: SCI continues to engage on a New Jersey bear season, an issue that SCI has been involved with for over a decade, a possible bear season in Florida and bear seasons all across the northeastern US.
 - SCI's Foundation Education/Conservation Program: SCI supports research and education projects on carnivores across North America, and currently proposes to assist research on mountain lion and bear populations in Texas.
 - Please see report in Appendix
- **Update: Current and Future Multistate Grants (Bryant White)**
 - **Current Grants:**
 - The MSCG awarded for 2024 will fund a national survey of trappers to collect information on trap types used by trappers (to document use of BMP traps and guide future research), furbearer species preferred, number of trappers nationally (to document current growth in trapper numbers....yes, trapper numbers are increasing!), understand trapper demographics, etc. This will be the fourth iteration of this survey

which was conducted in 1992, 2005, 2015. We need to repeat this survey every 10 years to guide research and communication efforts. We will partner with Responsive Management to conduct this survey.

- Under this grant we AFWA will also conduct Trapping Matters Workshops and Wild Fur Schools for state and federal agencies, The Wildlife Society, and other Conservation Organizations
 - The Committee will also be partnering on a MSCG awarded to SEAFWA on developing social media packages for agencies to use for trapper and furbearer hunter recruitment and to educate the public about the importance of trapping in wildlife management. This is a critical need because the public is highly uniformed about trapping and, as a result, easily misinformed by groups with anti-trapping agendas.
 - **Future Grants (2025 cycle): Grant proposals were approved by the Committee and will be submitted for consideration in June**
 - **Grant ideas could be submitted by SUWC**
 - **Grant 1:**
 - Women's Trap Camp (see more information and request attached)
 - All instructors/participants are women
 - Recruit women/families
 - Create social network to support
 - Make this a self-sustaining regional R3 effort
 - Strong regional interest
 - **Trapping Matters Workshops**
 - Educate agency staff about trapping, BMPs, key messages
 - Wild Fur Schools
 - **Grant 2:**
 - Public Perceptions/Key Messaging Video
 - Shorts on trapping for Agency Social Media
 - Video on BMP Process
- **Update: Best Management Practices for Trapping Program(Bryant)**
 - The AFWA Furbearer Conservation Working Group will conduct a survey of State fish and wildlife agencies on current trapping regulations and R3 efforts conducted for trapping
 - Partnering with the American Rescue Plan to sample mesocarnivores for SARS-CoV-2 to investigate susceptibility and disease transmission dynamics
 - As of March 2024 the program has sampled 18 species of wild mammals totaling ~500 samples.
 - Trap Testing field projects for the development of BMPs, and SARS-CoV-2 testing during the fall of 2023/winter 2024 will focus on badger, bobcat, coyote, gray fox, marten, opossum, raccoon, red fox; incidentally captured skunks will be tested for SARS-CoV-2. Projects will be conducted in 15 states including Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas involving all regions. We anticipate the capture of ~300 animals during these projects.
 - **Update: Canadian Trap Testing and Certification Program (Dave Kay)**
 - Please see report in Appendix

Assignments for next meeting:

- The AFWA Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group, Resident Game Bird Working Group, Predator Management ad-hoc group will develop a **Conservation Brief on Predator**

Management. The group will have a draft prepared for review before the September meeting of the SUWC in Madison, WI.

- Develop a resolution on predator management
- Review the charge of the AFWA Furbearer Conservation Working Group
- Submit MSCGs noted above

Appendix

**Update: Canadian Trap Testing and Certification Program
Women's Trap Camp (MSCG for 2025)**

Status of AIHTS implementation and top trapping issues, research needs and other trapping related items of interest in each jurisdiction

- Items of note...several jurisdictions have moved to electronic licensing and others are considering it pending lessons learned from these pilots. This platform is critical to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of trapping programs and in delivery of enhanced fur harvest reporting systems, one of the most important modernizations to happen to provincial and territorial trapping programs. Such changes facilitate the collection of much better information on fur harvest and, importantly trapping effort, getting us closer to being able to establish status and monitor trends of furbearers. The current lack of robust information on furbearers is a vulnerability in maintaining positions on sustainability of furbearer harvest and will help to enable a more collaboration relationship with trappers in a co-management context
- Several jurisdictions in eastern Canada have instigated programs incentivizing harvest of beavers and coyotes to reduce conflict issues due to declining trapping activity and a number of others have instigated wolf management programs for caribou recovery.
- Some jurisdictions are involved with furbearer re-introduction efforts in the United States, with Ontario Marten translocations to Pennsylvania and BC Lynx to Washington. Both BC and Alberta recently completed projects to translocate Fishers to Washington State
- Several jurisdictions in the east have been monitoring Muskrat populations due to perceived declines, presumed to be related to habitat loss.
- Incidental catch of domestic pets in killing neck snares is the most significant emerging concern among jurisdictions, and is a major consideration in implementing the recently approved best design of killing neck snares for coyote. Some jurisdictions are implementing setbacks and required notification signage in areas of higher risk.
- Administration of Registered traplines, where these systems occur is another concern, with some jurisdictions engaged in reviews of policies to more effectively and efficiently deal with issues around supply and demand, maintaining activity, license transfer, vacancies, etc. We have agreed to hold a virtual workshop to collaborate on this topic and discuss solutions to many common problems among jurisdictions here, likely in the early new year.
- We are also looking at other such workshops to collaborate on solutions around incidental catch of domestic pets and on fur harvest and effort reporting.
- We are wanting to move Coyote and Raccoon restraining traps from Phase 2 (ie. traps that are certified to be humane but not yet mandatory) to Phase 1 (ie. certified traps that are mandatory for use for trapping these species) and will be

submitting a proposal to “start the clock” on this in the coming months, instigating the 3 year phase-in for making these traps mandatory

- The successful validation of the reference trap comparison protocol for coyote leghold traps is critical to facilitating this move given the need for multiple models of certified traps to be available to the trapping community.
- This validation was conducted by the TRDC and Innotech Alberta through analysis of field capture and necropsy data and simultaneous analysis of mechanical characteristics of 10 different trap models. These models were the only models still in production, meeting the protocol requirement for the testing of 5 new traps of each model. Results were consistent across all models with the RTC protocol correctly predicting those models that passed the FCN (4) and those models that failed (6). The CFMC has reviewed the report and we will be re-submitting the proposal to adopt this protocol as an appropriate alternative to Field capture and Necropsy in the coming weeks.
- Other Trap research and development priorities are moving ahead around device modification and BMP's to minimize incidental catch with Killing Neck Snares, expanding killing snare research to samples of wolves in Alberta, BTP videos produced through partnership with Quebec trappers and supporting jurisdictions on phase 1 implementation of KNS where desired



WCTEP Women's Trap Camp
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September 26, 2023

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE, SUPPORT, AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES (AFWA)

RE: WCTEP Women's Trapper Education (aka Women's Trap Camp)

Dear Bryant White,

*Going forward, any use of female or women language refers to female-identifying and non-binary individuals.

We would like to inform you of an exciting, new program the Wisconsin Cooperative Trapper Education Program (WCTEP) has recently initiated. In 2021 we created the first-ever Women's Trap Camp (WTC) that has since graduated 98 students and generated 18 new women apprentice instructors (3 of which are now full WCTEP instructors). Steadily, we have increased the number of WTC instructors to accommodate the growing number of students, improve the quality of the course, and develop multiple camps annually. With such interest, 2023 was the first year we held an advanced "Fur-to-Fork" event with 9 WTC graduates. However, with additional instructors and events, comes greater responsibility and cost. The Wisconsin Trappers Association (WTA), Fur Takers of America (FTA), Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Furbearers Unlimited (FBU), and many other groups including the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) have assisted in paying most of the fees associated with our camp. To obtain the funding needed to hold the annual course and grow additional camps, it takes a lot of time and energy soliciting donations and writing grants. As the coordinator for this group, I am humbly asking AFWA to consider assisting with financial and material resources to allow this new venue to go national by offering regional programs.

PURPOSE OF THE WTC: The goal of Women's Trap Camp is to create an annual all-female trapper education opportunity via a trapping camp to recruit female trappers, promote our heritage and the sustainable fur industry, teach women fur processing and utilitarian skills, create a community amongst students to retain female trappers, and foster more female trapper education instructors. We hope to expand this program to multiple camps in the Midwest as well as other regions throughout the U.S.

WOMEN'S TRAP CAMP: The WTC is an event planned and administered by WCTEP instructors that occurs at an established facility that includes both indoor lecture facilities, meal and lodging opportunities, as well as outdoor trap setting and fur handling sites. The camp runs for 3 days, covers basic trapper education, Best Management Practices (BMPs), furbearer management and research, fur handling, trapper ethics, trap setting, food procurement, and fur utilization/sewing. Participant



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graduates receive WI Trapper Education certification as well as opportunity to meet female mentors and apprentice to become future WCTEP instructors.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: Although women do attend our traditional trapper education courses, there are many who are anxious and intimidated by a male-dominated heritage. As a WCTEP instructor, I've seen it firsthand. Women tend to be less inclined to ask questions, start conversations, participate in illustrations such as skinning and trap setting demos, and they leave with an altered experience because of insecurities. By removing the invisible barrier to trapping for women, we're further opening the door to a greater user group, encouraging family involvement, and supporting the future of regulated trapping.

The WCTEP continues to perform as a leader in trapper education nationally with a steady number of students graduating annually and a significant increase in instructors over the past 5 years. In 2020, the WCTEP had over 350 instructors with 53 of those women. In just three years, the WTC alone has increased the number of female instructors/apprentices by 34%! We'd like to use that momentum to continue to promote women in the trapping community, give them a place to connect with other female trappers, feel encouraged by those women teaching them, and eventually hold their own classes and camps.

In 2023, we are expanded the class to a full 3-day course to reduce time constraints, increase educational opportunities and provide a more complete experience. It would be great to find the funding to make this a 4–5 day course to further reduce time constraint and improve student interactions. We are also working to satisfy inventory needs of our sponsor-donated WTC trailer with necessary trapping, fur preparation, and fur utilization tools.

A big part of retention in any activity is finding a community that a person can connect with. We believe that an all-women's trap camp initiates friendships and bonds between women who find it difficult to locate and connect with others like them. This new program with expanded hours not only includes the typical fur school agendas that the WCTEP encourages and supports but also includes a social and community building segment to promote discussions amongst participants and share experiences. To continue education and provide a community, a private Facebook group for the WI Women's Trap Camp graduates and instructors was created and currently has 90 participants. Graduates continue to connect, share tips and tricks, and openly ask and answer questions. We used this group to create meetups at the multiple rendezvous across the Midwest. This year over 20 women from previous camps attended the WTA rendezvous and a few of them participated in the trap setting contest for their first time ever (see photo).

We have also created a public Facebook page (WI Womens Trap Camp) that currently has 205 followers and a link on the WTA webpage. Women interested in attending can follow this Facebook page and visit our <https://wistrap.org/womens-trap-camp> to get more information about the camp, learn about our



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sponsors and find other opportunities to get involved. The WDNR is also creating a webpage for the WTC and other camps that should be available shortly.

Lastly, our program is devoted to promoting our sponsors and contributors. A portion of the camp is dedicated to talking about the work our sponsors do and how students can get involved. We encourage our students to become members of those organizations and contribute to those who support and protect our trapping heritage and regulated trapping. Many of our sponsors are approached by our graduates during rendezvouses and other events to thank them and sign up for their organization's membership.

We ask that AWFA consider assisting with material and financial support and partnering with us in locating potential states and instructors in other regions of the US that would be interested in developing their own program. I am willing to help these states to create and hold such classes and to train instructors. To date we've been successful in obtaining grants from the FTA, the WDNR's R3 program, and gaining solid support from the WTA. However, we still struggle annually and with your involvement and assistance we think this program has a solid future across this nation. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jenna Malinowski

WCTEP Instructor, WTA Lifetime Member, NTA Member, and co-founder of the WTC