

Spring 2014 Trapper Education Committee Meeting

March 16, 2014, 8:00 a.m., Stoney Creek Inn

Gerianne Albers, John Olson, Nate Kroepelin, John Irwin, Richard Clark, Virgil Schroeder, Erika Froeming, Ed Harvey, Nathan Roberts, Arnold Groehler, Bryce Larson, Al Nickel, Mike Kortenof, Bob Barnett, Dan Carroll, Mike Widner, Larry Meyer, Scott Zimmerman, Bryan Hauser, Lee Sillars, Junior Prudlick

- 1. Updates from WTA Correspondence Course Coordinator:** Graduates for 2013 were 681, 509 in 2012, and 200 in 2011. Had a number of “old” students complete the course, one from 6 years ago! Current drop in fur prices might stifle the huge interest...90 so far this year, 20 less than this time last year. DVD charges went up a \$1 each (1, 2, or 3 videos) due to increased postage rates. Things went well with supplies except for manuals. Ended up with just 6 left... Gerianne: We ran low due to high interest in wolf trapper ed and in ag teacher increase. The online and DVD offering has made it much easier to handle, more so than anything else. In the future, Statewide Correspondence Coordinator will get priority if we get down to a limited number.
- 2. Updates from New and former Interim WTA Statewide Coordinator:** Bryce handed out a two page report. Discussed the phone conference in January with Gerianne and John. Handling 15-20 calls per day and forwarding quite a few to the respective district coordinators, with a 48 hour turn around on all. Also, just so all know, from the time of contacting Bryce regarding a class, it can take up to two months to get it on the website. Put about 15 classes on line so far. Steve Van and Bryce are talking about how to improve and one suggestion is to go back to one website (DNR) with the WTA website just forwarding folks to the DNR.
We now have 680+ names on the instructor list and would like to build a survey to learn who’s active and interested so we would then have a list of folks willing to assist and help with various workloads (wolf TE, trapper TE, classrooms). Another is the use of the Darwin Road warehouse for shipment of all materials. Computer tracking, great storage, and free postage! Lee Sillars: Background checks – how long will they take in the future? One person sitting to the right of Lee – it took him three years to get the check completed. John Irwin – taking too much time. Sent one in last July and have heard nothing. Nicke has also sent requests in and no answer yet....Gerianne suggested to check with Mr. King to see if we can get the channels moving faster. Junior – one of his new instructors is a hunter ed instructor but was turned down for trapper ed. Who needs to check on background checks?

Recommendation: Geriann, Bryce and Mr. King to build a conference call to discuss the background check process. 244 new graduates since February 25th....with most of those from last year.

- 3. Updates from WTA Wolf Trapper Ed Coordinator:** 4 classes in 2013: Crex 33, Madison 41, Mead 8 (after a few zones were closed), Rhinelander 62, for a total of 144 graduates. Both years graduates are now to be “grandfathered” if this becomes mandatory (we’ve kept registration information for all in attendance). In 2014 – all possible Saturdays are filled between when permits should be issued and the opening date, for a total of 5: 9/13 – Iron River; Crex 9/20; Madison (might look for an alternative site) 9/27; Mead 10/4; Rhinelander 10/11. Hopefully in 2015 we’ll begin to focus on the SE portions of WI.

Recommendation: Would like to see the application deadline change to December 10th. Richard Clark – folks calling at the last minute asking what to buy for trapping wolves.....often times asking for tools not even legal, or not legal until after December 1st. Brian – Had a wolf tag this year and had problems finding locations where to trap without bumping into bird hunters.

- 4. Updates from DNR Furbearer Ecologist:** John Olson updated committee on a recently approved National Conservation Need proposal (NCN) by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Hopefully these critically needed funds will allow us to complete a national Trap Ownership and Use Survey in addition to needed BMP trap research and Outreach efforts. Details of this grant in addition to building goals and strategies will occur at the Technical Working Group meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska next week.
- 5. Updates from DNR Statewide Coordinator:** Geriann and committee recognized John Irwin, recent recipient of the 2013 Trapper Education Instructor of the Year. Patch contest – Macey Loka’s design won. Voting was by the whole membership that attended the Membership meeting. Five applicants in total. Will take about a year to get the patch available, and will use the muskrat patch until then. What about the old, old patch – can we include this in a “history of trapper education” ...good idea.
- 6. Law Enforcement Update:** Nate Update – John Welke has been the person involved, but with increased workload on John’s time, Nate will begin to take a lead role in trap and furbearer management needs. Question – what about the colony trap issue in the NE? **Recommendation: Can we get the colony trap rules clarified by law enforcement?**

7. **Budget status – Purchase Order for 2013–14:** Explanation of last year's Purchase Order. **Should we add a line item for the wolf trapper education? Recommendation: Yes, at \$1,000.** Virgil – new fur kits? Later on in the agenda. What about the Appreciation Banquets? **Recommendation: Geriann to contact the Statewide Rec & Safety Specialist to see what they need regarding invitations of TE instructors to these events? Recommendation – to increase the P.O. for the Events Coordinator from \$2700 to \$3700 because they're increasing the number of shows and contacts.**

8. **Budget status – Trapper Education & Incidental Fur:** Reviewed the fine details with one suggestion/recommendation: **Get all of the paper work to members prior to the meeting and then get all of the minutes out to those in attendance.**

9. **Nathan Roberts Intro and Otter avoidance:** Started with BMPs in 1999; and has worked in various locations around the U.S. including Missouri, New York, Alaska, including projects focused on reduction of incidentals. Grew up in MO and spent lots of time in fur sheds. Life time member of NTA and MOTA. Out of the Rhinelander office. Otter avoidance in New York. Limited beaver seasons and closed otter seasons in portions of New York. With a majority of otters taken in beaver sets they looked closely at otter take in body grips. Nathan explained the research efforts they undertook and how they came up with a trigger change tied to a regulation change. Showed the type of triggers used that would allow beaver trapping yet protect otters. Need an 8" window which means a 330 or larger; triggers twisted together and no longer than 6 ½ inches with a two-way trigger. Results were that trappers still caught beaver and reduced otter take significantly. Reduced muskrat and small beaver take significantly. Mike Widner – Should know that many trappers question the limited number of otter permits. Nathan – Need to look at our survey methodology. How do our otter aerial surveys work; our otter modeling efforts; etc. Nathan's priorities will be bobcat and river otter (estimates and distributions). Question – Are federal trappers using otter avoidance? Yes. But we may need to have a discussion about the New York system.
 - a. **Otter** – Good idea to use the trigger configurations as a TE tool, in TE classes and at rendezvous. **Recommendation: Support from the committee to consider using incidental fur funds for purchase of triggers and building a brochure.**

b. Domestic species – Body grip cable ties.....some of the springs are not tight which could result in cable ties not being effective. But we can include something in a brochure regarding this, in addition to including at least 3 cable ties in case a problem occurs. What about hunter ed addition? MN said we can use anything in the packet – we have their permission. Arnie says folks in southern WI have this already and he now has a dozen sessions planned with various dog groups. Need a training element in addition to the handout. **Recommendation: We build such packets, and we need to do outreach to other organizations such as WWF, WBHA, DU, PF, etc.** MN did about 50,000.

c. Others – nothing reported.

10. Instructor Survey: Bryce reported that we now have a list of all instructors on an historic list.....and would like to conduct a survey to check on their status, history, interest in future involvement and interest in doing additional, separate presentations for school groups. Add to the survey: “Do you have any additional hard needs as a trapper education instructor?” Add to the survey: “If you have an instructor please include here ____”. This may help as a number of instructors are “other” instructors (hunter ed., etc.).

On the last mailing to those not responding we need to add a note that “we’ll have to drop them from the list of instructors if we don’t hear back.” Include in this mailing a note about the instructor website.....possibly use “survey monkey” as an invitation in the paper survey?

Graduate Survey – J. Olson informed committee that we did a graduate survey years back (Heidi Roesler) and we might want to consider in the future. Will check to see if those results are available....what about asking for email addresses....?

11. Potential need for inventory specialist: WTA is doing the survey already. Possibly take the current inventory and give it out to the districts to do a “check off”. Everything needs to be on the inventory otherwise it’s not covered by the WTA insurance. What about those doing trapper education outside of the WTA? WTA Board did pass a motion stating that district TE inventories need to be kept up and items replaced if lost. **Virgil to check with Steve Van on what WTA currently has... will bring this up at the Fall Meeting.**

12. Allocation of TE publications, Correspondence vs. other classes*
(addressed above)

13. **MOU Updates – liability clause and DPI clarification:** Concerns regarding instruction by ag teachers under Act 168 might require an update to the MOU, as they're not WTA members. **Recommendation: Geriann to check with our Legal staff to see what advice they have.**
14. **Potential need to enter in past TE classes and create instructor cards:** FYI. Have rosters from 2005+. None of the earlier classes are entered into our ALIS system. The online system requires a new number and all of this will take additional time. Will look into working with CS&L. **Recommendation: Contact Susan Cook of CS&L as the first step.**
15. **Possibility of automated TE card printing:** FYI. Geriann explained how much time it takes – about 40 hours, just to enter data. Lee – this needs to be done. If we have this data base updated it might make things easier to get instructors invited to the instructor banquets.
16. **Mandatory Wolf TE:** Junior says it's the most controversial topic in his area...the wolf license is a stand-alone; a person doesn't need a trapping license. **Committee recommendation: we need to move forward on this topic, especially with recent support by DNR Administration.**
17. **Hound hunting in TE classes:** Erika Froeming. WTA member, correspondence graduate. Sporting Dogs Committee member and active hound person. Irwin and Olson strongly supported getting this topic in front of folks. John Irwin – this is more wolf harvest education than wolf trapper education. Might we suggest mandatory training for all...Nate – from LE, they agree with this concept with quite a few complaints the last year....Junior – it would be better addressed by hound hunter instructors, not trapper education instructors as they have the knowledge and skills for such. John Irwin – yes, this could help us to “mend fences” with some individuals of hound groups. **Recommendation: Erika and John Irwin to work together regarding inclusion of an hour presentation into our wolf trapper education workshops.**
18. **Sporting Heritage grant:** \$10,000 to \$200,000 grants, but trappers are not part of shooting groups so now cannot apply for such. Humane dispatch DVD? DNR cannot apply for any such grants. Olson will try to bring this up, if allowed, at the TWG meeting in Alaska next week as this might be a topic of interest for the AFWA program.

19. **Concerns with “being a WCTEP graduate” requirement for TE instructors:**
Is this important? John Irwin feels it’s quite important. Junior the same.

20. **Publications needed:** Junior – folders! Need a bulk order of folders for TE instructors. Tri-fold on release of dogs from various traps. N.A. Furbearer Management publication. Some other brochures need additional re-prints. What about ring binders....? **Recommendation: Look into a bulk order of folders and keep abreast of the N.A. publication availability.**

21. **Trap incidence updates:** Update. Body grip and enclosed trigger trap issues discussed. Great discussion and hopefully the few problems we’ve documented will eventually disappear as education continues and alternative traps are more available.

22. **Online class processing:** update. Those using love it as it reduces workloads and errors.

23. **District TE supplies update:** BMP trap buckets are out. They now need to add id tags to all traps. 75% of the \$22,000 reprint of new student manuals came from incidental fur fund (FF). 1. Fur kits appear to be a priority. 2. Another item Geriann will complete is a set of high quality photos for displays, which were on the list last year and can be obtained for few dollars. 3. Additional trap buckets were asked for. 4. DVD projectors were on the list. 5. Display back drops are needed. **Recommendation: Develop one new fur kit for each district of just WI furbearers, not wolverine and lynx; and survey districts to see who needs DVD players; display back drops; missing furs; and additional trap buckets.** Note: We can add items we don’t have as we can get them, such as bobcat, but to use quality furs available through trapper education. We will work toward getting one fur kit first, and fill in gaps of existing kits.

24. **Ag Teacher trainings:** Geriann noted that a June conference is on the calendar.

25. **BMPs:** John’s update, basically that WI is quite involved in wolves and coyotes and will assist in necropsies of approximately 75 canines in Missouri in mid-April.

26. **Next Meeting:** Fall Rendezvous, Thursday night.

27. **Other Business:** none noted.

Meeting adjourned, 2:15 PM