

I hope this report and update finds everyone doing well and enjoying what spring in North Dakota has to offer. We welcome Travis Leier of Velva as our new Vice President. Travis has been actively involved with our education program this spring, along with doing some trapping and mentoring a young trapper. Work is not complete without attending a few meetings with the interest of the trapping community front and center. Our sincere appreciation to Glen Baltrush for his many years of volunteer work as Vice President and education program instructor. He has not gone anywhere and continues to provide advice and help where he can.

We had our Furbearer Workgroup meeting last month. It was great to get together again and enjoy some healthy discussions. A more complete report is available in a separate document which is also posted on the website. Take a moment to read the details. We are continuing our efforts to increase the river otter harvest before the proclamation goes to the Governor in July, so stay tuned. Many good things came out of the meeting, as well as some things we need to continue to work on.

On the down-side: the automated license system for the combination license holders still cannot tell us who traps and who does not. This has been a serious concern for us and the education program as we do not know who we can direct proactive and beneficial information to. Very frustrating, especially with current technology and funding directed for this purpose by the 2015 legislative session. This past season saw a banner year for late season upland bird hunting, so there were a few conflicts with hunters, their dogs, and folks using cable devices. We are working on making more information available for all user groups, us included, to reduce this potential threat to using cable devices in North Dakota. If you know of an opportunity or participate in bird or dog hunting groups that may benefit from a presentation or educational material, please let me know. We have the resources to handle just about any situation.

We have worked with Game and Fish to improve our communication regarding furbearers on their website. We have been able to add a "Furbearer Primeness Chart", adding the respective link to the BMP for each of the species, and streamlined the "Furbearer Observation Report". Check these out at <https://gf.nd.gov/hunting/furbearers>. Use the observation report to document species that you see or have evidence of their presence. All species are important as these reports are helpful and needed. A few minutes to document a sighting will go a long way for the benefit of all.

Education Program Instructors – if you have dates and locations of this year's classes, please let me know as soon as possible. If you would like a class in your area, let me know as well. Right now, this is what is scheduled:

August 3, 5, and 7 – NDGFD/OWLS Bismarck – Fur Harvester Education Class
September 30, October 1 and 2 – Velva Wildlife Club – Fur Harvester Education Class
October 9 – Velva Wildlife Club - Using Cable Devices in North Dakota (Basic Training)

There is a marked increase in interest to use cable devices in North Dakota. I conducted a few impromptu sessions last fall and early winter, and for those who attended, did very well and had a great time. I think starting folks out on the right foot and being successful will benefit our collective future. We will have a day session to teach the basics (tools, equipment, placement, ethics, responsibility, physiology, and hands on field work). We will see how things go and hopefully be able to do this statewide in 2022.

As a reminder, the raffle drawing will be July 1st. Phil should have your ticket stubs and money by June 25th.

Keep your membership current, take care out there and be safe, Rick