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**The Official Publication of the PFSC
January/February 2020**

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golewis1948@icloud.com

PA Chapter NWTF

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panwtfsh2@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Harold Daub
dauber@pfsc.org

PA Trappers Association

Todd Strohecker
olddogtrapper@hotmail.com

PFSC OFFICE MANAGER

Susan Hughes
susan@pfsc.org

Pheasants Forever

Kent Adams
kadams@pheasantsforever.org

United Bowhunters of PA

Thomas Redfern
redferntwr@gmail.com

PA Flyers Association

Allen Roberts
aroberts198@comcast.net

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The mission of the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen & Conservationists, Inc. is to protect and conserve Pennsylvania's natural resources, outdoor heritage and Second Amendment Rights.



Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen & Conservationists, Inc. (PFSC)

2426 North Second St
Harrisburg, PA 17110
717-232-3480
info@pfsc.org
www.pfsc.org

Editor

Melody Schell
editor@pfsc.org

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Cover Photo:

Braxx Veilleux with German Shorthair Pointer June (owned by Derek Carlson), shows his limit of pheasants he harvested during the Mt. Jewett Sportsmen's Club's youth pheasant hunt. Read more about the hunt on page 28.





Dog-Proof Raccoon Traps – Simple but Effective

By: Todd Strohecker, PTA VP East

**Be Responsible!
 Be Respectful!
 Be Ethical!**

Pennsylvania is a state where trappers rely heavily on the foothold trap, and modern foothold traps have changed very little since the Gibbs “Single Grip” coil-spring trap was patented in the 1920s. Like the 30-06 Springfield cartridge is to big game hunting, the superior design of the coil spring foothold trap has stood the test of time as the most efficient tool available to trappers.

Even non-trappers are somewhat familiar with how a foothold trap functions - an animal steps on the trap pan, which in turn, triggers the jaws to close securely on the paw.

Foothold traps are most often concealed along the travel path of the animal with the intent to catch them while traveling or attempting to reach the hidden bait placed near the trap.

Concealing steel foothold traps to catch walking furbearers has been a productive method for centuries. But around the turn of this century, the habits and ten-

dencies of one abundant furbearer in North America inspired a new trap design.

That popular and abundant furbearer is the raccoon. Raccoons have very dexterous paws and couple that with the fact that they are gluttons make them unique among furbearers. These traits had trap designers exploring ideas about a trap where a raccoon triggers it by grabbing bait as opposed to stepping on the trigger.

Due to these unique traits, a trap could be designed that was efficient at catching raccoons but couldn't be triggered by a pet dog curious about the bait. A trap that met these criteria would be a huge benefit to raccoon trappers all across the country.

While there have been a few designs on the market over the years, it was not until the Lil Grizz Getz hit the market that trappers started to take a serious look at using dog-proof traps as an efficient tool on their line. The Grizz trap resembled a round tube with a ground anchoring device on one end and an enclosed trigger that needed to

be pulled to fire the trap.

Raccoon trappers are taking notice of this new trap, and many serious longliners are adding some to their arsenal. Nuisance control trappers are also utilizing this new efficient design. Raccoon trappers finally have a tool they can use around pet dogs without the fear of catching them.

Although the Grizz trap is a great design and has been successful, there were two negative aspects regarding the trap from which it greatly suffered. First, the trap was quite expensive, and the price kept many trappers from gearing up heavily with dog-proofs. Secondly, availability was an issue at times; even at the high price, the demand was often greater than the supply.

Because the demand for an affordable dog-proof was so high, other trap companies had the incentive to bring dog-proof traps to the market. Today, there are over a dozen brands on the market; and each has similarities and differences, but all function the same.

A dog-proof trap is designed to encapsulate a raccoon's foot and has the triggering and restraining mechanism enclosed in a housing with a small opening. The trap is triggered when a raccoon reaches inside and pulls on the trigger or bait. Most dog-proofs look like a simple metal tube to the untrained eye.

Dog-proof traps can be placed on or near raccoon trails or places they frequent often. Traditional foothold traps are set in such a way that they are concealed from the animal. The difference with dog-proofs is the trap is placed in plain view of the raccoon to aid in provoking its curiosity.

Many trappers prefer a solid type bait like a large marshmallow, placing it under the trigger. Using a large, solid bait makes it harder for the raccoon to steal without triggering the trap because the bait cannot be pulled beyond the trigger



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without firing the trap.

Most trappers also utilize a scent lure in conjunction with bait when setting a dog-proof trap. Sweet type lures that possess the odor of anise, cherry, or molasses are very appealing to raccoons but not so much to pets.

As with any traps, dog-proof traps must be anchored very solidly with a long stake or heavy wire or cable. A large raccoon is quite powerful, and insufficient anchoring can result in a lost pelt and trap.

Dog-proof traps have taken the trapping world by storm when it comes to harvesting raccoons. Fur trappers and animal damage control trappers are now heavily utilizing this new tool because of its efficiency and ease of use.

More information on trapping can be found at www.patrappers.com or accessing the PA Trappers Association on Facebook.

PTA

Smallbore Rifle Shooting Continued from Page 19

Since 1933, the league has been in continuous operation except for 1943, 1944 and 1945 due to World War II.

The Pittsburgh and Suburban Rifle League has produced many national smallbore champions, including Barry Trew, who won five NRA National Indoor Championships between 1956 and 1969, two-time National Indoor Champion Dave Cramer, two-time champion and Olympic Gold Medalist Jack Writer (Munich 1972), Bruce Meredith, Wayne Moore, Kenny Johnson and many others, including Robert K. Moore, who won the first-ever NRA Indoor Championship in 1952. Trew was also the only junior shooter to win a national championship during his freshman year of college (1956) and was the first-ever four-year All-American for rifle while shooting for Washington and Jefferson College.

The league has also produced several ladies' champions, including Bertie Moore, Petie McCord, Melissa Ealy-Stagon and Becky Braun. Braun, as well as Trew, Cramer, Writer and Meredith have won medals in international competition, and Trew, Writer and Russell Seitzinger, who shot in the league in the 1930s are former World Record Holders in international competition, with Seitzinger winning five gold medals in the 1930 World Championships.

The Frazier-Simplex Rifle Club of Washington, Pennsylvania, has won eight national indoor championships since competition began in 1952. Dormont-Mt. Lebanon has won three, including in 2004 being the first civilian rifle team to win a national indoor championship since 1980. Other Pittsburgh and Suburban Rifle League teams winning national indoor championships include the Waynesburg Sportsmen's

Club, and most recently, the Murrysville Rifle Team won the 2018 NRA Indoor Metric (three-position) national championship.

Shooters can begin in local junior programs as soon as they are mature enough to hold a smallbore rifle, usually around age eleven or twelve. Clubs such as Frazier-Simplex, Dormont-Mt. Lebanon, Murrysville, and the Post 228 Junior Rifle Team at the Irwin Sportsmen's Club all offer junior training and competitive junior shooting programs, and Frazier-Simplex also hosts a 4-H rifle team in the summertime. Junior shooters are instructed by certified coaches and learn strict safety training before handling a rifle.

This spring in the NRA Junior Indoor National Championships, a team of four young women age 15-19 from the Dormont-Mt. Lebanon Junior Rifle Club placed second in the nation with a score of 1567 out of a possible 1600. Members of the team include Ali Rovers, who led the team with a score of 393-25x, Erin Rutherford - 392-28x, Cassidy Turner - 391-23x and Kelly Katilius - 391-20x. All scores were fired at 50 feet indoors, four-positions using iron or open sights, and all scores are out of a possible 400. An "X" is a 10 that is closer to the center and is used for tie-breaking. All four young ladies hail from the Pittsburgh area. Another local team made up of all junior women from the Frazier-Simplex Junior Rifle Club placed fourth in the nation with a score of 1556.

In addition to local rifle leagues and colleges, 16 area high schools in southwestern Pennsylvania have competitive rifle programs competing in the WPIAL. These WPIAL high school students only com-



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plete in the prone position (laying down), and the individual and team championships are hosted at the Dormont-Mt. Lebanon Sportsmen's Club every spring. The trophy donated for the individual championship is the Taylor-Eddy award, named for two local smallbore rifle shooting legends, Earl Taylor and Mike Eddy, who were both members on local national championship teams. Other high schools throughout the state shoot three positions like the NCAA teams do.

For some people shooting is a recreational sport that can be enjoyed over a lifetime with friends and provides an environment to meet like-minded people. For others, it's an intense challenge requiring discipline, effort and practice with the goal of competing in rifle leagues, national and even international competition. Tryouts for U.S. teams are held every year for competitions such as the World Championships, the Pan-Am Games, and the Olympics.

If you have an interest in trying smallbore shooting, contact the PRPA, NRA, ASSA, CMP or USA Shooting to find a club or program near you. In the Pittsburgh area, you can contact the Pittsburgh and Suburban Rifle League through their Facebook page or by emailing pghrifle@gmail.com.

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