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On Target

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The mission of the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Inc. is to provide a statewide, united voice for the concerns of all sportsmen and conservationists; to insure that their rights and interests are protected; and to protect and enhance the environment and our natural resources.

Cover Photo:

Isaac First, 13 of Dauphin County, with his first Greyfox from his Lycoming County trap line.

Photo by Josh First





Trapping & Hunting with Dogs – We can coexist with a little understanding and some common courtesy

By Todd Strohecker, PTA VP East

Pennsylvania's fields, forests, mountains and streams are shared by many individuals who have one important thing in common -- they deeply love the outdoor opportunities the Keystone State has to offer. Two groups which instantly come to mind are hunters and trappers. Hunters who enjoy time afield with their bird dog or hound sometimes fear the outcome if their dog would happen to get caught in a foothold trap or cable restraint. Knowing what to do in that situation is what makes the difference between a very traumatic experience and nothing more than a slight annoyance.

The Pennsylvania Trappers Association has taken a proactive approach to educating both hunters and pet owners on how to release their dog from a foothold trap or cable restraint in the event of their pet being caught. The PTA has produced a color brochure that details the steps on releasing pets from both foothold traps as well as cable restraints. The brochure also contains information about the importance of trapping and the responsibilities of being a pet owner. In addition to the brochure, we also are providing a smaller card containing similar information that fits nicely into a hunting vest or backpack for in-field reference.

There is always a chance that a hunting dog will be caught in a device used in fur harvesting at one point or another throughout its life. First of all, hunting and trapping seasons overlap throughout the majority of the fall and winter seasons. Secondly, trappers (especially those targeting canines and raccoons) are often trapping the same general areas that small game hunters are hunting. The reason for this is easily understood. Hunters know the type of habitat that holds the most rabbits, pheasants, and grouse. Trappers know that foxes and coyotes are found near prime small game habitat because they prey on many of the animals that live there. Raccoons use this type of habitat for both food and cover as well.

That being said, there are often times when hunters and trappers are utilizing the same area without each other even knowing it. Fox and coyote trappers will often set foothold traps away from cover. This helps them to reduce the chances of catching non-target animals like opossums and skunks. Wild canines are known to travel field roads, and trappers like to set along them. The chances are probably greater for a hunting dog to be caught in a foothold trap travelling from the truck to the hunting area on a farm road than while actually hunting.

Because the use of specialized techniques are necessary to effectively harvest foxes and coyotes, there is always a chance of your dog getting caught in a foothold trap or cable restraint when you are afield during trapping season. Fortunately, both foothold traps and cable restraints are designed to capture canines (and other furbearers) securely by the foot or neck and hold them alive and unharmed until the trapper arrives. Because of this, there is little risk of any injury to your dog.

Whether or not you will be able to release your dog by yourself depends on the temperament of the dog and how easily you can physically control it. Some calmer tempered dogs will allow a trap to be removed from their paw without becoming agitated or frightened. Others may unexpectedly bite when



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Effective 1/1/2014 **Please Print Legibly**





United BowHunters of PA

<http://www.ubofpa.org/>

By Wes Waldron, Chairman, Legislative Committee

With Jay Delaney's District 7 seat on the PGC Board of Commissioners over two years vacant, Ron Weaner's District 6 seat empty as of last year, and the terms for Commissioner Schlemmer, District 2, and Commissioner Putnam, District 3 up this coming June, our organization is beginning to question the efficacy of the GSAC candidate selection process. Add to that the apparent apathy of the Governor's office regarding sportsman's issues, the House of Representatives inability, and unwillingness by some members, to give the PGC an increase in revenue, and it begs the question if in fact there is a conspiracy in Harrisburg to destroy our game agency?

In our efforts to support SB 1166 when it passed the Senate and went to the House, we were often shocked at the reasons some Representatives gave for opposing the bill. With most legislator's well-staffed with people to do "homework" it is amazing how many know so little about the Agency that they have so much control over. One would think that if they accuse the Commission of "wasting money" that at least they would know the revenue sources and the limitations on uses of that revenue.

A common misconception with sportsmen – and surprisingly with many legislators, only about a third of PGC lands

include gas rights, and most of it has already been leased. With the fall of natural gas prices, the revenue the PGC receives from that source have all but disappeared, in some cases. In addition those royalties can only be utilized for land purchase, and those purchases are bound by a \$400/acre limit for the Commissions part. The largest portion of the purchase price paid is provided by other organizations such as NWTf and the Western PA Conservancy.

Of course then we have those Representatives with grudges and animosities who drowned 1166 with ridiculous numbers of amendments, and others who opposed due to their belief that white-tailed deer are all but non-existent in most Wildlife Management Units. A fact certainly not supported by the deer harvest numbers, not to mention the number of trophy bucks now being taken across the state.

We can only hope that during this new session of the General Assembly that common heads will prevail, and that animosities, petty grudges, and ignorance and misconceptions will be put aside and the Agency responsible for our valuable wildlife and habitat resources will receive desperately needed revenue so that they may effectively manage those resources. **UBP**

The United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and protection of bowhunting opportunities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The UBP supports game management based on sound biological principles and a "resource first" philosophy.

Trapping & Dogs Continued

the trap or paw is touched or handled. Many dogs will not differentiate between a trap and a hand and will bite toward the general direction where they feel discomfort. If you are unsure how the dog will react when you try to open the trap, it is best to find another person to help. If you feel you do need help, it will not hurt your dog to be in a foothold trap for a short period of time while you find someone. Doing so may actually give the dog some time to calm down, and a calm animal is much easier to release. When your dog is caught in a foothold trap, it is extremely important that you remain calm as well. Remember, your dog is going to be fine. Do not make a hasty decision which might result in you or someone else getting severely injured from a dog bite.

Remember, trappers do not intentionally want to catch pets or hunting dogs. The fact is that hunters from time to time are going to encounter traps, and trappers have to understand that dogs are

sometimes going to be caught. Fortunately, a dog getting caught in a foothold trap or cable restraint is nothing more than a small inconvenience for both the hunter and the trapper. It is important that both hunters and trappers show courtesy toward each other and their respective sports. If a trapper sees hunters near the area they are trapping, a polite gesture would be to let them know the general location of the traps and show them how to open a trap in the event a dog would get caught. Hunters need to respect that fact that trappers have the right to share the fields and forests with them. Under no circumstance should anyone disturb, set off, or remove any wildlife from a trap that does not belong to them. Some hunters feel that it is permitted to set off traps when they are found. This is not only unethical but is also unlawful. It is our responsibility to the future generations to show tolerance toward all sportsmen and women, or we risk the loss of outdoor opportunities for everyone. **PTA**

