

PENNSYLVANIA FEDERATION



**OF
SPORTSMEN & CONSERVATIONISTS**

**On the Front Lines -
So You Can Be In the Woods, On the Water or
At the Range**



**The Official Publication of the PFSC
November/December 2019**



n Target

PFSC On Target November/December 2019

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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.



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PFSC welcomes stories, art, and photographic contributions. We will consider, but assume no responsibility for unsolicited proposals, manuscripts, art, or photographs.

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Cover Photo: Lou Mione with his 4 year old grandson Julius Mione, on State Game Lands 145 (Lebanon County), while walking in for some dove hunting. Lou said they jumped a dove while walking in, but he missed it. They set up overlooking a soybean field. When it started to drizzle, they moved under a pine tree where Julius sat and held a stick to mimic a gun, allowing Lou to teach him the basics of gun safety and patience - which lasted about an hour. After it was done raining, they got up and walked around while Julius practiced shooting at Tweety birds with his stick.

Photo by Louie Mione, III



Fur Takers Provide Pelts for the Global Fur Market

By: Todd Strohecker, PTA VP East

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

One of the most frequently asked questions posed to trappers is, "what do you do with the furs you catch?" While a few furbearer skins are tanned for wall hangings, garments, and other fur novelties, the majority of the wild pelts harvested in North America end up on the international fur market. The public is often surprised by this because fur is not commonly worn in the United States; it is a practical item in the

bitter cold climates of Russia and China. Much of the wild fur caught in North American finds these countries as the end-user.

Currently, the fur market is going through one of the most depressed periods in its history. Lots of factors play into what is causing the nauseatingly low fur prices and can range from the price of oil to Chinese tariffs. Only six short years ago, trappers and fur hunters experienced a short fur boom where the price of pelts had reached a point where trapping was profitable.

Today, the only real bright spot is the coyote market, which is almost entirely driven by the trim trade. Canada Goose is a company that manufactures high-end goose down coats that are all the rage right now. The cost of many of these coats is over four figures, and the look of Canada Goose is currently so in fashion that many knock-offs are appearing.

The part of the coat the trapper is interested in is the coyote fur ruff

sewn around the opening of the hood. Fur-trimmed hoods are very fashionable right now, and the public has realized that natural coyote fur is one of the best-looking trims for this application. Just take a look at the hood trim on a high-end coat with real coyote fur and compare it to a cheaper faux fur coat - the difference is clear.

Pennsylvania trappers and fur hunters have three avenues to market their furs. These options are local fur buyers, fur auctions hosted by various Districts of the PA Trappers Association, and shipping to the large Canadian fur auction houses.

Historically there were a large number of country fur buyers scattered throughout the state, and most everyone had a buyer within close proximity. These fur buyers act as middlemen and buy fur and sell to larger buyers or end users.

Country fur buyers were vital because they provided an easy outlet to sell fur during times when participation in trapping and hide hunting was much higher. A trapper could physically take their catch to the buyer daily and receive payment for it when times were lean. Country fur buyers were also essential to youth fur harvesters as an outlet to sell their hides.

Today we have very few country buyers left, but most that are left are actively buying fur not only in the shops but also at the PA Trappers Association Fur Sales hosted by regional districts. Trappers will meet at a venue on the sale date, and their furs are offered up for sale to several buyers on site. Some of these district fur sales even use a live bid auction format, which is exciting to watch, and most all provide food and drink.

The last avenue for a trapper to market their catch is to ship directly to one of the large Canadian fur auction houses. The auction houses hold multiple auctions per year and sell fur directly to end



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I am enclosing _____ to pay for one year's membership in P.T.A. and I will work with your organization to bring about trapping laws that are fair to all and better conditions for all trappers in Pennsylvania.

Name _____ Age _____

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State _____ Zip _____ County _____ District _____

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users that come from all over the globe.

The auction houses employ regional agents who are responsible for traveling routes to meet with fur harvesters and pick up and catalog their fur. These agents do the legwork to deliver the fur to the auction houses and, in a way, act as a traveling buyer.

One positive of shipping is that often, a fur harvester will receive better prices since the end users are buying the fur directly. On the other hand, once the fur leaves the trapper's possession, the amount received is totally out of the trapper's control, as the trapper can not reject the number on the auction block. During times of meager fur prices like we are currently experiencing, some trappers have their furs tanned (or even home tan them themselves) and sell them to others who may want to use them in rustic décor or to create fur items. Doing so can be profitable for the trapper, but often this market cannot absorb a large number of pelts harvested.

Trapping and hunting animals to harvest their fur is one of the oldest professions; and when it comes to what happens to the fur, very little has changed through-

out history. What does seem to change drastically is fashion trends, and unfortunately, neither trappers nor fur buyers have access to that crystal ball. **PTA**



Information on Pennsylvania Trappers Association District fur sales is available at:
www.patrappers.com or
accessing the Trappers
Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/PA-Trappers-Association

PA Trappers Report PFSC General Session September 14, 2019

Our State Rendezvous hosted by District #3 in Washington back in June was a success. They did a great job running the event, and the turnout was good. We had quite a few special guests at our flagship event. Miss Pennsylvania, Miss PA Outstanding Teen, Miss Laurel Highlands Outstanding Teen, and Miss Pennsylvania Teen Rodeo all made appearances. One of the highlights on Saturday was Troy Landry from the show "Swamp People" did a meet and greet, and it was very well received by the trappers and local residents.

The 2020 Rendezvous will be held on June 25, 26, & 27, 2020 in Clearfield, PA and hosted by District #4. This may be our most centrally located venue for a Rendezvous, so we are expecting a good turnout of Pennsylvania trappers and sportsmen and women.

The 2020 State Banquet will be hosted by District #12 on Saturday, April 4th at the Ludwigs Corner Fire Dept. District #12 hosted our 2018 Banquet and did a great

job and we are looking forward to it. This is an event that is of interest to all outdoors folks - not just trappers.

The Pennsylvania Trappers' Association Districts are currently hosting several Trapper Training Schools throughout the State. From the reports we are getting, a good number of students signed up for the schools this year. Our volunteer members are also hosting Cable Restraint and Successful Furtaker classes in cooperation with the PGC.

We are very proud of the educational material the PTA distributes, and our furbearer coloring books are one of the most successful. To date, we've distributed 30,300 Educational Wildlife Coloring books, with at least another estimated 11,000 expected by the end of the year.

As mentioned in our report back in June, WMU 4A will now be open for fisher, and the season has been lengthened by 3 days. WMU 4B has also been opened for bobcat hunting and trapping. The permit

furbearers create a lot of interest and keep trappers active in these times of lower fur prices.

The PGC adopted a new regulation and now the locks legal to use for beaver snares are the same as the approved cable restraint locks. The original wording stated a release lock was required. There is a vast discrepancy in the industry on the mechanics of many of these snare locks. The locks which are approved were tested through the BMP process. Hopefully, the confusion will be eliminated for both Game Wardens and trappers.

We first made our Heritage Protection Coin available at the Rendezvous. 100 coins were minted, and all of the proceeds go to our legal defense fund. The cost of the collectible coin is \$50. We were delighted to sell over half of the coins at the Rendezvous. There are still a few available. If interested in purchasing one, please visit www.patrappers.com.

PTA

Or Current Resident

Wildlife Leadership Academy Seeks Motivated Students To Become Youth Conservation Ambassadors

The mission of the Wildlife Leadership Academy is to engage and empower high school age youth to become Conservation Ambassadors to ensure a sustained wildlife, fisheries and natural resource legacy for future generations. The Academy offers high-achieving youth, ages 14-17, a comprehensive study of specific wildlife species, including classroom and field-based, hands-on education. Led by experts, including biologists and educators from across the state and beyond, the program also engages participants in team work, friendly competition, and an awareness of their natural world. The Wildlife Leadership Academy has opened its exclusive Youth Conservation Ambassador nomination process to the public and is currently seeking referrals of motivated students to become Certified Conservation Ambassadors. Nominations are now being accepted online at <http://picweb.org/nominate/>. For more information, please contact Katie Cassidy at 570-939-5109 or kcassidy@picweb.org



2020 Poster & Photo Contest Theme: "Conservation"

Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen & Conservationists Annual Art Poster / Photo Contest Invites Youth to Share their Love of the Outdoors through Art and Photography

As you know, the former Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs is now the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen and Conservationists. This name change came about from a reflection of what we truly stand for and who we represent as an organization.

So this year, reflecting on PFSC's name change, think about the words conservationists and conservation and how they relate to nature and our resources.

Let's first look at the word "Conservationist". Dictionary.com defines conservationist as: Noun - a person who advocates or promotes conservation, especially of natural resources.

What is conservation? That is a great question and one that we will explore through this year's poster and photo contest! Let's head back over to Dictionary.com: Conservation - Noun - the act of

conserving; prevention of injury, decay, waste, or loss; preservation: conservation of wildlife; conservation of human rights. Official supervision of rivers, forests, and other natural resources in order to preserve and protect them through prudent management. A district, river, forest, etc., under such supervision. The careful utilization of a natural resource in order to prevent depletion.

Simple enough? Let's go with an example we can understand using a food problem. You are running low on milk and you usually have a large glass with dinner. You won't get to the store till the next day and you need some milk for cereal in the morning. What do you do? Conserve! Have a smaller glass of milk with dinner so that you will have enough for your cereal in the morning.

GET EXCITED: Learn more about con-

servation efforts that support wildlife, fisheries and the outdoors where you live!

GET OUTSIDE: You won't know how amazing nature is until you LOOK!

GET INVOLVED: By looking closer, you will see how conservation efforts promote and protect our natural resources, and how you can make your neighborhood a better place to live if you become a conservationist.

Judging of posters will take place at the PFSC Spring Conference - March 2020. For more details and complete rules, contact the PFSC office at (717) 232-3480 or susan@pfsc.org. The official rules and press release can also be downloaded from our website. www.pfsc.org. Click on the "Info & Events" tab.

The poster and photo winners will be published in the On Target.

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