

2016 WCTWS Technical Training Summary Trapping Matters workshop

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On September 24th the Wisconsin Chapter of TWS, combined with student chapters and several other co-sponsors including the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), Max McGraw Institute, the Wisconsin Trappers Association (WTA) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, to host a Trapping Matters Workshop at the Dan Trainer Building on the Stevens Point campus. This workshop focused on three important components – Humane Trap Research, Communications Skills, and Traps & Trapping Techniques.

Members of our state chapter (Jamie Nack, Shawn Rossler, and John Olson) combined with John Irwin of the WTA and Dennis Brady of North American Fur Auctions, Inc. to present a well-rounded view of the importance of regulated trapping as a management tool in North America. Presenters shared their knowledge of human dimensions' research, key messages, how to gain informed consent of society, how to work with media in developing positive messages, the importance and findings of decades of humane trap research, and why regulated trapping is important in furbearer management and wildlife management.

Hands-on activities included trap setting, mock interviews, and interactive “trap stations” set around the perimeter of the resource building – all while dozens of tour groups were wandering the campus!

Evaluations gave us a great deal of information on benefits to participants and suggestions for future such efforts. Eighty-eight percent felt "a great deal" or "moderately" more familiar with the Best Management Process (BMP) as it relates to improving trapping and assurance of animal welfare. Eighty-eight percent of participants also felt "a great deal" or "moderately" more knowledgeable about how to communicate about trapping to others. When asked: “What did you enjoy most?”, one participant responded: “...was the trapping stations outside and all the demonstrations. I wish they were a little bit longer.” Overall thoughts of the workshop included: “I learned a lot in this workshop and have a better understanding of [regulated] trapping. I had a good time.” And of course we'd have to add this one(!): “I loved the enthusiasm of the instructors and the outside aspects with stations.” And one great summary comment: “It cleared up a lot of misconceptions I had.”

This type of workshop was the first ever for our state and chapter, and worked well with its' emphasis geared toward new professionals, spokespersons for resource-related organizations, and even crusty administrators! This one-day effort provides another option in trapper education in Wisconsin, which complements Wildlife Fur School (5 days), Law Enforcement Fur School (4 days), University Fur Schools (3 days) and critically important standard trapper education classes (taught by over 200 trained WTA members). Attendance also qualified folks for 7 credit hours

(Category 1) towards TWS certification and professional development. Food was great, instructors were charismatic and participants left with smiles! Future Trapping Matters workshops are likely, but would occur during winter/spring, not summer/fall - expecting a much larger turnout! Nevertheless, this workshop had the highest student turnout of any of our state chapter's technical trainings.