

TRAPPING LAWS IN MINNESOTA THAT RESULT IN DOGS KILLED IN TRAPS – RESULTS OF AN OPINION SURVEY

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<http://www.DogLovers4SafeTrappingMN.org>

Executive Summary:

Valuable hunting dogs and loved family pets are killed each year in traps in Minnesota. Dog Lovers 4 Safe Trapping MN (DL4STM) documented 20 dogs killed in Minnesota in legally set body grip traps in 2012 even after 220-size Conibear-type body grip trap regulations went into effect to try to protect dogs. This continues today. DL4STM is a private citizens' organization working to have Minnesota's trapping regulations modified to prevent or eliminate dogs killed in traps.

In 2014 DL4STM funded this survey to determine opinions about the problem of dogs being killed in traps in Minnesota. Results from 133 respondents showed a strong concern for this problem. Ninety-five percent of survey respondents indicated concern about Minnesota trapping regulations that allow traps that can kill dogs. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents are concerned that dog-killing traps are set during the time when they are hunting with dogs. Sixty-five percent of the respondents reported that the use of traps that can kill a dog causes them to not hunt or modify their hunting. Nearly all of the respondents were Minnesota residents.

The most common comment indicated the need for Minnesota to modify trapping regulations to protect dogs. Comments showed many respondents felt the Minnesota government, e.g., the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and the Minnesota State Legislature is not doing their job to correct this problem and that trappers and the Minnesota Trappers Association (MTA) are ignoring the problem. Some respondents articulated their heartbreak at losing a dog in a trap. Some respondents suggested modifications in the current trapping laws to require dog-lethal traps to set a minimum of 5 feet off the ground (in a tree) or completely submerged underwater.

INTRODUCTION

Minnesota trapping regulations allow for traps and snares that can kill dogs (body gripping traps like the conibear trap and locking snares) to be set where they can kill valuable and loved animals: hunting dogs, search and rescue dogs, other working dogs, and family pets. Data collected by Dog Lovers 4 Safe Trapping – Minnesota (DL4STM) indicated that at least 20 hunting dogs were killed by trappers in Minnesota in 2012. These dog deaths occurred in 2012 despite new regulations aimed at preventing dogs from being caught in 220-size Conibear-type traps. The numbers of dogs killed by traps have been underestimated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).

DL4STM has expressed concern about this problem. In 2012, DL4STM initiated discussions with MDNR regarding dogs being killed in traps and suggested dog-friendly trapping regulations. MDNR suggested DL4STM work with the legislature for a solution. DL4STM contacted State Legislators and it was suggested that DL4STM work on a compromise solution with the Minnesota Trappers Association (MTA) to develop new trapping regulations. MTA has not cooperated with DL4STM's requests to develop modified trapping regulations that would significantly reduce or totally eliminate dogs being killed in traps.

Because dogs continue to be killed by legally-set body grip traps, DL4STM developed this survey to obtain opinions about this problem from the sporting public in Minnesota.

METHODS

During March 2014, DL4STM conducted a 5-question survey to provide an indication of public opinion regarding trapping regulations that result in dogs being killed by traps and whether trapping influenced their hunting patterns. The survey instrument is included as Appendix 1.

Responding to the survey was completely voluntary. Our intention was to distribute the survey to sportsmen as widely as possible to obtain responses from a variety of hunters, trappers, and outdoors enthusiasts. The main method of distribution was printing the survey as a DL4STM advertisement (approximately 4 inches x 6 inches) in 2 successive issues (March 7, 2014 and March 14, 2014) of Outdoor News (Minnesota printing). Outdoor News is a weekly publication with independent printings for a variety of states. For Minnesota the readership is estimated over 168,000 (Outdoor News 2014, http://www.outdoornews.com/media-kits/2014_Rate_Sheet.pdf). We assume, based on distribution and content, Outdoor News reaches Minnesota hunters, trappers, and outdoors enthusiasts. This method of distribution with only 5 questions was selected because it was affordable for an organization supported only by donations. The survey is intended to document the opinions of the respondents, which we assume represents the opinions of a segment of Minnesota's residents.

On March 3, 2014, the survey was also placed on the DL4STM website and sent as an email to the DL4STM emailing list (along with other DL4STM correspondence). The end-date for accepting survey responses was predetermined to be 1 week after the final Outdoor News printing or March 20, 2014. The survey was removed from the DL4STM website on that date.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We received responses from 133 people primarily via email. Ninety-five percent of survey respondents indicated concern about Minnesota trapping regulations that allow traps that can kill a dog to be set where they can kill hunting dogs (Table 1). Eighty-eight percent of the respondents are concerned that dog-killing traps are set during the time when they are hunting with dogs (Table 1). Sixty-five percent of the respondents reported that traps that can kill a dog causes them to not hunt, not hunt certain areas, not hunt during the trapping season, not hunt upland gamebirds, or to only hunt on game farms (Table 1). Nearly all of the respondents (93 %) reported being Minnesota residents (Table 2).

Survey respondents were asked one open-ended question requesting their opinion on this issue. These comments are summarized in Table 3 and provided, as received, in Appendix 2. The most common comment was that trapping laws in Minnesota need to be modified to protect dogs (Table 3). Suggestions included banning the use of body-gripping traps and snares that can kill dogs. Law modification suggestions were to restrict body-gripping trap sets to either be 5 feet or higher in a tree or completely submerged underwater. Some respondents suggested that Minnesota modify their trapping laws to be like Wisconsin and other states that have more dog-friendly trapping regulations (Table 3).

Other comments discussed trappers needing to change their attitudes and ethics (Table 3). A common suggestion was for Minnesota Government (MDNR, Minnesota Legislature, and/or the Minnesota Governor's Office) to solve this problem (Table 3). Some respondents indicated they experienced a dog being caught and/or killed in a trap or snare (Table 3). Comments also regarded respondents quitting hunting or modifying their hunting because of traps/snares that can kill their dogs (Table 3). Some respondents commented that the issue lacks fairness because there are many more hunters than trappers (Table 3). Comments expressed that dogs are loved, expensive, and/or companions and need to be protected from traps/snare that can kill dogs. A few comments that were not from hunters indicated that search and rescue operations, and therefore public safety, are being impacted by Minnesota allowing traps and snares that can kill dogs (Table 3).

More than 20 pages of comments from Question 5 are included in this report – copied and pasted directly from email responses as Appendix 2. These comments provide a powerful statement that dogs (and pets) being killed by legally set traps and snares creates a significant problem in Minnesota that needs resolution. A common suggestion indicated the need to modify trapping

laws and concern with the inactivity of the DNR, legislature, and/or the Governor's office in solving this issue. Some respondents stressed that the current 'box with a 7 inch overhang' restriction does nothing to protect dogs. Respondents felt that they were not able to share public land with trappers because Minnesota regulations allow for traps that endanger dogs. Respondents indicated that they have stopped hunting, do not hunt after the trapping season opens, or hunt in other states because of the safety of their dogs. Respondents indicated that this impacts Minnesota's economy and mentioned spending their hunting dollars in other states. Respondents stressed that this issue has solutions and mentioned trapping regulations that would solve the issue (see Table 3). Respondents were perplexed why Minnesota does not have trapping regulations that protect dogs, while other states do. We suggest you read these comments in Appendix 2 as they provide a powerful indication that something needs to be done. A respondent suggested legal action against the State of Minnesota by dog owners. The use of body-gripping traps on the ground and the threat they pose to dogs is negatively impacting hunters and dog owners and is preventing some people from participating in outdoor activities.

The Dog Lovers 4 Safe Trapping Minnesota (DL4STM) website points out that the group was founded by hunters, some of which had experienced a dog killed in a trap. The group clearly expresses that they are not against trapping. DL4STM states that they are a single-issue group intending to disband once the issue of Minnesota law allowing for methods of using body grip traps and lethal snares that kill dogs is resolved.

TABLES AND APPENDICES

Table 1. Responses to questions 1-3 relating to opinions on dogs being killed by trappers in Minnesota. Survey was funded by Dog Lovers 4 Safe Trapping – Minnesota, March 2014.

Question 1 - Are you concerned about Minnesota trapping regulations that allow dog-killing traps to be set where they can kill hunting dogs?

Responses:

Yes – 95% (126 respondents)

No – 3% (4 respondents)

Did not respond to this question – 2% (3 respondents)

Question 2 – Does the fact that dog-killing traps are set during the time when you will be hunting with dogs in the same areas concern you?

Responses:

Yes – 88% (117 respondents)

No – 2% (3 respondents)

Did not respond to this question – 10% (13 respondents)

Question 3 - Do dog-killing traps cause you not to hunt, not hunt certain areas, not hunt during the trapping season, not hunt upland gamebirds, or only hunt game farms?

Responses:

Yes – 80% (106 respondents)

No – 6% (8 respondents)

Did not respond to this question – 11% (15 respondents)

Indicated concern when hiking or training (not hunters) – 3% (4 respondents)

Table 2. Responses to question 4 regarding whether the respondents are residents of Minnesota. Survey was funded by Dog Lovers 4 Safe Trapping – Minnesota, March 2014.

Question 4. Are you a MN resident?

Responses:

Yes – 93% (124 respondents)

No – 3% (4 respondents)

Did not respond to this question – 4% (5 respondents)

Table 3. Summary of responses to Question 5: an open-ended question regarding dogs being killed in traps in Minnesota. Survey was funded by Dog Lovers 4 Safe Trapping – Minnesota, March 2014. (See Appendix 2 for unedited responses to Question 5.)

Question 5. What are your thoughts about this issue?

Summary of responses by subject:

Trapping laws need to be modified to protect dogs (43)

Ban body-gripping traps, traps/snare that can kill dogs (10)

Body-gripping traps only set high (5') off the ground or underwater sets (4)

Change law like Wisconsin/other states (4)

Mark traps (sign, flagging) (2)

Trappers/MTA need to change attitudes and/or techniques, blame trappers not the device, problem is unethical trappers (16)

Found traps on private land/posted private land (3)

Non-issue on private land (1)

Not against trapping, but against trapping when a dog can be killed (2)

Dog Lovers group are tree huggers/the problem (2)

Respondent is a trapper who doesn't used 220s unless set in a tree (1)

DNR, Legislature, and/or Governor's office needs to solve this problem (14)

Respondent experienced a dog caught/killed in a trap/snare (9)

Respondent quit hunting/quit hunting in MN because of traps (7)

Fairness - Many upland hunters impacted by significantly fewer trappers (7)

Concerned because dogs are loved, companions, part of family, and/or expensive (7)

Impacts search & rescue dog training and searches, therefore public safety (4)

Concerned about traps killing dogs (3)

Nobody has the right to put out traps that can injure dogs (3)

Concerned about children getting caught in these traps (3)

Reduces the enjoyment of hunting (3)

Against any trapping (2)

Concern about traps at boat launches for waterfowl hunters (2)

Stopped taking dogs on public trails because of traps (1)

No longer hunts on public land (1)

Hard/impossible to release a dog from a body-gripping trap (1)

Appendix 1. The survey instrument as printed as a Dog Lovers 4 Safe Trapping – Minnesota advertisement in Outdoor News on March 7, 2014 and March 14, 2014. This survey was also placed on the DL4STM website from March 3-20, 2014 and sent to email addresses from the DL4STM e-mailing list on March 3, 2014. Survey was funded by Dog Lovers 4 Safe Trapping – Minnesota, March 2014.

Dogs Are Being Killed In Traps

Minnesota trapping regulations allow for dog-killing traps (body gripping traps like the conibear trap) to be set where they can kill valuable and loved hunting dogs. Each year more hunting dogs are killed by trappers in Minnesota. We've asked:

The Minnesota DNR for better regulations. They said to work it out with the legislature, so we've asked: *The Minnesota Legislature* for better regulations. They said to work it out with the trappers. So we asked:

The Minnesota Trappers Association to help us develop better regulations. They're still stalling. Dog owners: you need to be concerned. Please help our cause by sending us an email with your answers to the following questions:

1. Are you concerned about Minnesota trapping regulations that allow dog-killing traps to be set where they can kill hunting dogs?
2. Does the fact that dog-killing traps are set during the time when you will be hunting with dogs in the same areas concern you?
3. Do dog-killing traps cause you to not hunt, not hunt certain areas, or not hunt during the trapping season or not hunt upland gamebirds, only hunt game farms?
4. Are you a Minnesota resident?
5. What are your thoughts about this issue?

Please reply with your answers to these questions to: Dick Kimmel (retired DNR 30-year game-bird research biologist) at: kimmel@newulmtel.net

For further information: [Http://www.DogLovers4SafeTrappingMN.org](http://www.DogLovers4SafeTrappingMN.org)

Paid for by Dog Lovers 4 Safe Trapping MN



Appendix 2. Comments obtained from Survey Question 5. These comments were copied and pasted directly without editing from the email responses. Survey was funded by Dog Lovers 4 Safe Trapping – Minnesota, March 2014.

Once again, I am losing faith in our DNR and politicians to make the right decisions for our state. Will it take a politician's dog to be killed for them to realize the danger? Why/how does the Trapping Assoc. pull rank on a much larger group of hunters or dog owners in general? My guess is that our decision makers will again wait for hundreds of dogs to be killed and then wonder how they didn't make the right decision when they had the chance. Just the fear of these traps while walking around(not just hunting) is devastating to me. It better not be a dog of mine.

I have seriously curtailed the number of days that I hunt in Minnesota each fall. I don't hunt here after the trapping season starts. Instead, I travel ten hours to hunt in North Dakota. I would normally hunt grouse and pheasants in Minnesota 15-20 days per year. Since I came upon a dog-killing trap in the grouse woods (three years ago) my hunting days in Minnesota are down to two to three.

There are reasonable solutions to this danger to our hunting dogs and the limiting of outdoor opportunities to bird hunters with dogs. I support these recommendations for trapping regulation be made into law...

1. Body grip traps between 5" and 7" must be placed a minimum of 5' above the ground or snowpack, or submerged in water at least to the top of the spring loop.
2. Body grip traps up to and including 7" may be used in boxes securely fastened to trees or fence posts with the opening facing upward and a minimum of 3' above the ground with the trap recessed down into the box a minimum of 12".
3. Body grip traps may be used on the ground if placed in a box with the opening restricted to 4" high and 9" wide and trap recessed 12" into box.
4. Non-relaxing, spring-powered, or spring-assisted snares must be completely submerged in water. Non-lethal cable restraints (CR) are allowed on land with no "***entanglements***" larger than ½" diameter within reach of the CR.
5. Dog proof coon traps are required to have "pull only" triggers and cannot be baited with meat or fish products. (This prevents catching dogs by the tongue.) **entanglements** are trees, stumps and other objects around which an animal in a cable restraint could tangle the cable and choke itself.

I have become very sensitive to this problem to the point that I did not take my dog Grouse hunting this past fall for this very reason. I believe that other hunters may feel the same. If that is true, then many areas where Grouse hunting is a boost to the local economy, have suffered a loss of revenue because of this. I think this type of argument can be added to the list of reasons why the Dog Protection Bill needs

to be passed. There may be more support from lawmakers when they can be seen helping the economy by changing the law.

It's inexcusable that the legislature allows a small number of slob trappers to kill dogs when dog safe and effective alternatives are available. My vote this fall will reflect my opinion of the legislature.

I have had dogs since 1976 and had two close calls. Incident number one involved a snare with a bent washer on the cable. My dog got her head in the snare and the washer cinched it down, she couldn't move. She was struggling for air when I got to her. I was able to remove the snare. Incident number two involved a head trap in a 5 gallon bucket. My German shorthair was inches away looking into the bucket which contained what appeared to be fish in the bottom of the bucket. I was able to hold her back using the Whoa command. Darn good thing she was well trained or she would have suffered a broken neck if she stuck her head in the bucket. I put a stick in to discharge the trap. The trap had enough power to break the stick.

Trappers should be aware that death hold traps are humane but non game species should be considered. I am more supportive of reducing the overlap in seasons than loading someone else up with regulations that criminals will still ignore. I do not want to take my dog out of a steel trap either. If the seasons had less overlap I would just skip the last part of the season or hunt in a state where this is not an issue. We need trappers too or the state would hire their own and we know that is very expensive and ineffective. It seem I am done hunting by the time pelts are prime.

I truly feel if we could get level-headed sportsmen together in a non-confrontational meeting, we collectively could resolve this problem. Some DNR officials feel that the loss of a family pet is collateral damage.

This is really an issue of fairness. Nobody should have the right to place dangerous traps that can have unintended yet legal consequences for people and their dogs out enjoying minnesota public lands. I am an avid grouse and pheasant hunter in mn but once the the trapping season begins I head to Wisconsin for my hunting. I know my odds are low of coming into contact with a body gripping trap with my dog but why take the chance. I am not anti trapping at all. I only know a folks who trap and they simply will not use the body grip traps in any situation where they know the killing of a dog is possible. They love the effectiveness of the traps but do not believe it is fair to place non-target animals at risk. I truly believe these traps are used by many simply because they only need to be checked every 3rd day vs every day. This fact alone tells us they are very efficient machines and kill very quickly. The current situation really does anger me a great deal. I have to be safe as a hunter and not do harm to unintended targets. Trappers really need to do the same. I have practiced opening a 220 but have no idea if I could do it with my 60 lb golden retriever trapped in it. This is really just a common sense issue. Nobody has a right to

use our lands in a way that is dangerous. I understand there is always some risk when hunting woods or prairie with a dog but this issue can be eliminated without any significant detriment to trapping.

I have coyote hounds, I buy dog food by the ton, have around \$4000.00 in tracking and training equipment plus vet bills and expensive registered dogs. The MN. DNR has hated dogs since commissioner Alexander. I wrote Mr. Ed Bogges about dogs and traps. He told me there was no proven method to protect dogs. I told him he had no farther to look than to Wisconsin. There are a lot of dog hunters, trappers and a lot of state land to hunt on and they have no trouble. Their rules and regulations are and have been working for a long time. I feel my dogs and sport are in jeopardy from the opening day of bow season until the end of the late wolf season. The MN. DNR believes a dog in the woods is chasing deer and should be destroyed. I buy out of state licences in Wisc., Iowa and Missouri, in order to hunt during the Mn. hunting and trapping seasons. Which is a shame as I am a MN. resident. Trapping season in MN. is a cash cow business. I have never been asked for a tax id number when I have sold fur or shipped it to Canada for auction. I'm sure no trappers ever pay the self employment tax, most of them are on unemployment all winter. I cannot imagine a killing trap is humane. It is too indiscriminate, a leg hold trap can release unwanted animals. I see many snares with no name tags and once in a while a deer in them. In Wisconsin they are called restraints and they have stops so they do not choke. Good luck

I take body grips in consideration when I am outdoors in MN. Travelling to the Dakotas in the fall, I often cross MN after dark. I am very careful about where I stop to let the dog out, avoiding locations where there may be traps. When hunting pheasants in MN last fall, I tried to avoid culverts, fences and other spots where I might encounter traps. Living in Cook County, most trap problems are associated with the marten season. Prior to the establishment of new rules to protect lynx, the newspaper reported dogs killed by traps every fall. I don't hear about them now. I am very careful where I run my dog during the marten season.

*mark the traps and snares with colored flagging, *suspend all 220 conibear traps 5 feet above the ground, *make power snares illegal

I am not in anyway an anti trapping person. Trapping is both a legitimate sport/business and a necessity in many areas. A solution must be reached to allow the trapping and avoid injuries to unintended animals and people.

I understand the variety of activities, demands and conflicts which develop on public lands. Finding the "right" balance for everyone is not an easy task. With that being said there is no reason an upland hunter should have to be concerned about dog-killing traps during the season. I have nothing against those who want to trap but I have great concerns about dog-killing traps. A change is needed and necessary.

I believe the DNR is being very irresponsible about this issue. Body grip traps are used because they do not have to be checked as often. They are a matter of convenience for the trapper. However, the risk to dogs is too great--especially when trappers can hunt in ditches or other places where dog owners may not know these traps are placed.

This is a concern and it needs to be addressed. While all risks can never be eliminated, it is my understanding that other states have regulations superior to Minnesota that effectively address the issue. (Wisconsin?) Hunters and trappers need each other, I do not understand the trappers side for not wanting to address this issue.

** The DNR and legislature are being irresponsible and failing to do their jobs in not addressing this issue.

Although I have never trapped, I never had anything against trappers. After hearing the arrogance of trappers who seem to think they should be allowed to do whatever they want on public land and the hell with the rest of us, I am very angry that the DNR has proven to be so spine-less on this issue. There are over 100,000 upland hunters, most hunting with dogs, and only a couple thousand trappers using these deadly conibears, yet somehow they are calling the shots. I now despise trappers. If a dog of mine or one of my friends ever gets killed by a trapper, we have lined up a lawyer to sue the trapper in civil court. Our lawyer is one of the best in the state, specializing in animal cruelty issues. After taking the trapper to the cleaners, we have also been advised they we would have a strong case to also sue the DNR. The DNR has ample data to know that this risk is avoidable and has done nothing. We would definitely also sue the DNR.

My thoughts are that this isn't an issue. Do you realize how many dogs are accidentally shot by hunters? Probably more than are killed in traps and many times if a dog gets caught in a foothold trap it is just fine. My advice to you is to find a real problem to talk about in the public paper. Us trappers and hunters already have enough pressure from PETA and those other tree huggers we dont need any more people like you out there

This is an issue with solutions. Hunting and trapping are both important activities in MN, both from a recreational and an economic perspective. If we can put a man on the moon we can orchestrate an approach to trapping that will not unnecessarily endanger field dogs. For a hunter, his dog is part of the family, part of the hunting team, and a highlight in many memories....much more that just another critter. I have lost one spaniel to a trap and was fortunate to be able to save another from a snare. The only reason I was able to save the second dog was that the tapper had placed a tie of orange tape in a bush by the snare. That enabled me to quickly find the dog when he went missing for a minute. **This is an issue with solutions.**

I've had a dog caught in a trap. Luckily, and only due to luck, I was able to release him before he was killed. I'd like to see trapping season on public lands start after bird hunting seasons are finished or trappers place their traps slightly off the ground so dogs won't get caught.

We are very much in favor of outlawing the conibear trap.

I am very concerned about dog killing traps and during grouse season my dog got caught in 2 leg hold traps last season dead center on a upland designated trail I usually bring my granddaughter with but she was sick thank god. she could have stepped in one! . I do not bring my gordon setter with any more. Sad I have invested over 5,000.00 in this dog for hunting but she such a member of our family that I will not risk losing her. I am a mn resident and something needs to be done I've hunted grouse for 39 years and only the last 2 seasons had any problem

This issue hit close to home for us as we could have had something go very wrong last hunting season. My husband was out hunting in western MN and on public land trying to get some male roosters. Our dog was to the left of him and Jeff came upon two body grip traps and all that "warned" him were sticks in the ground. He had never seen these before but really scared him for the safety of our dog and then himself (notice the order of importance). He set one off to piss off the trapper but then left the other alone as he just wanted to get away from it to ensure our dog was safe. I posted this on story on facebook and people could not believe that this was possible. The issue here is awareness as once people hear about these stories they will have compassion. We do not need more dogs to die a HORRIBLE death to draw attention to this issue.

I support trapping as long as the tools being used are not life threatening to my dogs. Bobcats, foxes, and raccoons can all be taken efficiently with leg-hold traps. If a dog gets into a leg-hold trap, you release him and get on with the hunt. I've had that happen and I had no ill will toward the trapper. Dogs are suckers for dirt-hole sets and other baited sets. I recognize the use of leg-hold traps requires more frequent checking of one's traps, but that is just one of the responsibilities of being a conscientious trapper. My first choice for solving this problem is requiring that all body-gripping traps size 220 and larger be set only as underwater sets or elevated at least 5 feet above the ground. I would include snares as a part of that regulation, especially the spring-loaded snares that are now being used. - There may be a way to segregate trappers and bird hunters through timing of the seasons. Obviously, the later a season is held the greater likelihood snow could make it impossible to trap or hunt. Here in the north country (Bemidji area), I could live with a slightly shorter grouse season (maybe a couple weeks) in exchange for trapping with body-gripping traps and snares being delayed till December 15. Trapping with leg-hold traps could commence around the first of November. That would not solve the body-gripping trap problem for pheasant hunters. -- Wolf trapping can also be a problem even though those trappers are using leg-hold traps. Wolf traps are large (#4) and can do serious damage to a bird dog's leg. This is far less a concern for me than are the body-gripping traps and snares.

I do not feel every time I hunt I should be concerned about traps being set in the area where I will be hunting.

I am also concerned that they can kill highly trained search dogs, thereby putting human life in danger as well. There aren't that many good search dogs available at any given time. I am not a hunter, but we train every week and my dog is in danger from these traps. She is trained to find human scent - and there is human scent running up to these traps even if the trap itself was handled with gloves. We train weekly and the fear of losing a dog causes us to stay out of certain areas for most of the year. If we were to be searching for a lost person in areas where traps are likely, it would affect how we work our dogs and result in a less effective search, thereby putting the missing person in danger. These traps are not necessary, but if they have to be out there, at least have them off the ground.

The trapping laws in the state of MN need to be changed. I would be very happy if we had laws similar to WI. I know that the laws in WI are not perfect for dog owners but I could live with the protections that they provide.

I think they should have to set the traps capable of killing a dog in locations not accessible by hunting dogs on public hunting lands or delay the trapping season if practical to after the upland game seasons are over.

If they won't change the way they trap for dogs then ban all trapping until a solution can be worked out.

I only ask for modifications that will NOT allow a hunting dog to access these traps!!

I do not think it's fair to hunters and other people who enjoy the outdoors with their dogs that we have to worry about our dogs dying in one of these traps. So much so that it causes us to not hunt at all or not during the trapping season. I am not against trapping, but it should be done in a safe responsible manner so I don't have to worry about my dog dying in one of these traps.

I am a NW Wisconsin resident that mutual aids with the search teams of MN. I live on a farm in WI and allow a couple trappers to utilize our property during the trapping season. These WI trappers are also dog owners & feel compelled to trapped responsibly & within the laws of this state. We have had many conversations about the way MN DNR &

Legislature has have turned their backs on this issue. I'm hoping this issue will be resolved soon... I would like to be able to continue helping MN search teams but w/o the constant worry that my dog is in danger of being killed.

(In addition to hunting,) I am also a search and rescue dog handler and know many other's in this region. One of our dogs being killed or seriously injured in a body grip or power snare is a great concern to us. I have had a few close calls with traps recently during search and rescue operations and it has changed the way I work my dog. These changes unarguably negatively impact public safety. We HAVE to have our dogs work off lead to do the work we do, often they go out of sight from us and investigate scents. Losing even one search and rescue dog is a loss of hundreds, if not thousands of hours of training, thousands of dollars in cost of the dog, and most of all, puts the residents of this region at risk for not having the canine resource, as there are only about a 20 dogs in the region (WI and MN and Dakotas). Search and rescue dogs are not like a piece of equipment that we can go get another one; it takes 1-2 years to train up another dog.

My husband has been pheasant hunting for more than 40 years - it is his passion. I am very concerned when he is out hunting with our Weimaraner, Otto. Otto is a top notch hunting dog and a beloved pet. He sleeps on our bed! The fear/threat of losing him is horrible and should be unnecessary. Trappers stating that the overhang on bait boxes is sufficient to protect dogs is truly ridiculous. I guarantee Otto could get his nose and full head into the box. The traits that make him an excellent hunter (keen nose, strength, flexibility, and tenacity) are what could kill him with regard to the traps. -- Denny carries zip ties with him, but we know that they are not the answer. The traps need to be removed from the ground and placed high up on trees (high enough to catch what is intended). -- I have two questions for trappers: 1. If your goal is to sell what you trap - how much do you get for a dead dog? Nothing!! 2. Wouldn't it be more efficient for you to be able to view traps at a distance? This could be accomplished if the traps were off the ground and set on trees.

I have had a dog caught in a trap. This is something that has to be addressed to absolutely reduce the risk. I am not in any way an anti trapping person. Trapping is both a legitimate sport/business and a necessity in many areas. A solution must be reached to allow the trapping and avoid injuries to unintended animals and people.

We need all sides to come together,& forge a plan that allows for beneficial outcomes for safety of pets..... Plus enable trappers to still retain some rights.

I can NOT believe the DNR and the legislature is allowing this to continue! Of course we are not hunting where we would like to hunt, of course we are not hunting as much as we would like, WHO in their right mind would risk losing a great hunting partner and family member to something this stupid. My entire family is prepared to sit out a season of hunting (or as many as it takes) and we encourage others to do the same. The DNR is crying about losing hunters, well what do they expect when they allow such a dangerous activity to continue.

I recently moved from Stillwater MN to Somerset WI. I'm very concerned that Minnesota does not have a law in place that protects my dogs (two Gordon Setters who are not only hunting dogs but are valued family members). I will no longer hunt on public land in MN during the trapping season. My grandfather was a trapper and I trapped as teenager. I am not anti-trapping but I feel that MN needs a stronger law to protect hunting and family pets.

I've given my thoughts on the matter and though I am a woman and a relatively new hunter....only been hunting for 4 years now....I think very passionately about the problems that all hunters face....this is one of them. Please, can we do something about this because from what I've seen so far the buck is being passed back and forth and no one wants to take charge.

In conclusion; let's blame the trapper and not the device. Lets teach the trapper, lets hold *him* responsible and not try to make the conibear itself responsible, by eliminating it. If a gun is more deadly than a conibear, then why is gun hunting legal? Lets punish and deal with accordingly the *irresponsible trapper* who kills a dog with a conibear vs. punishing the *responsible trapper* by denying him his effective tool. Gun use, automobile use, power tools and anything else dangerous is assumed to be the liability of the user.

This practice needs to be stopped.

Both my spouse and I are trail runners. We have stopped taking our dog with us in certain areas because we fear these traps. I have nothing against trapping. I have major problems with irresponsible trapping and how body grip traps are allowed to be set in Minnesota. Remember we all pay taxes to support public land. Thank you.

Its incredibly frustrating. In fact the MTAs trapping manual/course, which is a requirement of new trappers, in fact states on 3 different pages that 5 feet off the ground for bodygrips is the only true dogproof and should be used. In meetings face to face with MTA they completely dismiss it. The

legislature, as well as the DNR needs to make new legislation a centerpiece. Its past being ridiculous, and changes should be made on private and public land. One set of rules.

It is crazy and immoral to allow these deadly traps to be set in areas where bird hunters are working their dogs. We have a moral and ethical responsibility to protect these domesticated animals. They trust us to do the right thing for them. I do not understand how a relatively small group of trappers can control the narrative/legislation in favor of the thousands of hunters that hunt public land with their dogs. I am not against trapping, in fact, I did it as a kid. That said, trapping regulations should be modified to make it safe for dogs.

We tend to hunt primarily on game farms and I would love to explore other areas but am very concerned that the traps could harm our dogs. A family friend had his dog caught in a trap. After the dog passed out from shock he had to use his belt as a tourniquet and give his dog CPR. His dog survived, miraculously, but this is one nightmare I could not even imagine going through.

Trappers who want it all say the solution is "city folks stay home" or "keep your dogs leashed." "They'll get into all sorts of trouble otherwise." "Trap's the least of your worries." Well that's a lot of self-serving bull. Fact is, we know how to keep dogs out of trouble, but body grippers and power snares are different. Lost a good dog in one of them. We know how to stay off the road, keep close, watch out for predators, all that. I tried those damn rescue instructions, though, and they weren't worth a damn. Body grippers and power snares are built to kill. "City folks stay home?" Ever hear of the outdoor recreation industry? We used to get around a lot, but if it's deadly out there, we're taking our "outdoor recreation industry" elsewhere.

Yes, we have a cabin north of Orr MN , and won't allow our dogs off of our 10 acres. We don't feel we can safely have our dogs on any trails. We are putting the cabin up for sale this year, in part due to this.

Limit Conibears to above 5' high, and eliminate wolf trapping (hunting is ok in moderation

. That the inconvenience of having to set traps up 5 feet is a small price for trappers to pay to save non-target animals from almost certain death. The current high fur prices will only increase the number of sloppy trappers and certainly the number of dog deaths.

My wife & I do not have kids so our german short hair Rudy is the closest thing. We recently went through the experience of having to put another dog down due to cancer. That was by far one of the most difficult things we have ever had to do. We were some what prepared for that experience

which didn't seem to lighten the blow at all. That being said, I can't imagine the feeling of losing a dog unexpectedly to a trap which I personally think is an inhumane way to kill an animal anyway. Thank you for your time, I sincerely hope that something is done about this.

It doesn't look like the Minnesota Trappers Association is interested in helping resolve this issue, it needs to be formally addressed thru the Minnesota Legislature and the DNR. This issue affects not only hunters but anyone who likes to get outside with their pets.

It seems to me that other states have solved this problem, so we Minnesotans (living in "The Brainpower State") should be able to as well. This just isn't a concern when hunting in the Dakotas which I have done for over 30 years.

Trapping is a barbaric, outdated horribe "sport". Fur is a dying fashion statement and most of what is trapped isn't eaten by trappers. I was at the wolf seminar way back when and the FWS trooper said out loud that even he didn't like these body grip traps. it is time to evolve and stop using devices that kill anything that enters them, and often the trapped animals linger & dies a slow agonizing death. SPORT is wwhen BOTH sides know they're playing! Let's move to protect our pets and people!

This has been a concern of mine for many years. Several years ago I personally almost lost my dog to one of the upland "box sets" placed along a raccoon trail when it stuck its head and neck into a five gallon pail with bait and a large killer trap. It was late afternoon and I was just walking the dog along a tree line heading home when the incident occurred. The minute I heard the snap of the trap and rattle of the chain I knew what had happened. I got to the trapped dog almost immediately but could not control the struggling animal and remove the trap from around its neck. Fortunately one of my neighbors was coming by and he stopped to assist me. The two of us still were not able to loosen the trap and the dog was weakening. About that time I heard another vehicle approaching so I ran out and flagged the driver down and asked for his assistance. Between the three of us we got the trap removed but my dog had passed out and stopped breathing. I did some mouth to nose resuscitation and lifted him up. Soon he began to breathe and stagger around but seemed OK.. The other guys seemed as glad as I was that we saved the dog and they left. The dog and I headed home where he drank a lot of water and ate his usual meal about an hour later. It's hard to phase a German wirehair! Never noticed any long term after affects to the dog. The trap set was legal and the trapper very apologetic. He said he had trapped most of his life but did admit he had caught a couple of other dogs with similar sets. I knew him and he was a good trapper who has tried to respect other outdoor users by changing his techniques. Don't know how he traps now. -- A couple years before the above incident my daughter's boyfriend went pheasant hunting down in the Marshall area with a really nice black lab that got

separated from the hunting party. They eventually found it dead with its head and neck stuck in a body gripping trap along a ditch bank. I don't know any other details but he was certainly upset with trappers for awhile.

I feel like there is a compromise needed on the types of traps used within our shared public spaces. If trapping can't be done in a safe manner that protects our beloved pets than it shouldn't be allowed on public land. The DNR and the trappers have an obligation to all Minnesotans to do better.

I hunt with a beautiful little 5 year old Brittany Spaniel in the Brainerd Lakes area for grouse and woodcock each Fall. Two years ago she was caught twice on the same day in trappers' snares. This alerted me to the danger of traps in general and I have examined Conabear 220 traps and fully realize I could not get little Morgan out of one on my own. So I no longer hunt grouse once the late October trapping begins. I love to hunt but I will not expose Morgan to the possibility of being killed in a body gripping trap. -
- I would welcome legislation that would limit the use of these traps in such a way that the possibility of a dog being caught in one would be eliminated. Without it, I will not hunt in Minnesota once the trapping season starts.

My son was barely able to save his dog while hunting on public land a couple of years ago. I will not take my hunting dog out where body grip trapping is allowed and therefor have limited our outdoor time together. I understand that both activities can be done simultaneously with certain precautions take by the trappers. I don't think either activity should be considered more valuable to the people of Minnesota than the other. Trappers should be able to trap. But if they can do so and very much reduce the chance that a family pet will be killed, I'd hope they would be willing to make the extra effort. Hunters' activities do not kill trappers' family pets. In addition to the above comments, I can't understand why responsible trappers would not prefer to do whatever is reasonably required to avoid killing domestic animals. The responsible ones most likely are doing that now. But when the regulations appear to be inadequate to protect our pets, I hope that our legislators will step in and help take care of this problem.

I am very much concerned about this as I enjoy hiking or hunting with my dog on public lands in MN. I have curtailed hiking and hunting with my dog because of the danger of traps. I see this as an equal-use fairness issue. Dog owners should have equal opportunity to use our public lands without incurring the risk of losing their dog in a trap. MN citizens who hike or hunt with their dogs on

public lands aren't endangering the lives or property of trappers and so the reverse should apply as well. Traps should be set out of reach of dogs and be clearly marked by colored flags or tape.

I am a bird hunter and own a very food motivated springer. So baited traps would be of great interest to my dog. I won't hunt anywhere near most WMA's, since they are the most likely to have traps. It makes me mad that as a citizen I am effectively being banned from using public property. Common sense...a slight modification of ones behavior can save a dog's life, without any adverse effect to the trapper. Trappers seem indifferent to the suffering of others.

I think changes to the law should be pursued.

I stick to private lands in Wisconsin and South Dakota. It is not worth such an avoidable risk. I would rather spend the extra dollars as an out of State resident knowing my dog is safe. If Minnesota won't do the right thing and take sensible legislative action to protect dogs, I will spend my dollars out of State. As the owner of a dog that hunts both birds and deer sheds this matter is extremely important too me. My dog and I shed hunt many public lands in Minnesota and to everything possible to avoid areas where traps may be set. I will also state that I have nothing against trapping. I trapped as a kid for years. That being said there are many trappers who are unethical and give the rest a bad name. These are the ones who are most opposed to taking a common sense approach to help resolve this issue. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

(Concerned) Yes—it's the main reason for not hunting grouse after the trapping season begins! I've no idea why the trappers are so against this when so many surrounding states have regs to avoid the possibility of harming non-targeted animals including hunting dogs. I hunt pheasants extensively and avoid areas that have obvious trapping potential! A number of things boggle my mind with this issue. First, the sheer numbers of bird hunters vs. those who trap should create a concern from those who make regulations. The asked for changes are not extreme in fact accepted and in place in neighboring states. I've had dogs for 40+ years owning and hunting Golden Retrievers and now have a Brittany who is absolutely my best bud. I listened to a trapper representing the Trapper Assoc. at a Pheasants Forever banquet last Saturday and his claim, holding up a conibear trap that "this trap will not kill your dog!" That was an absolute insult to my intelligence. I avoided making a scene turning my back to him but wanted

to ask him that if that's the case set the trap and put your arm through it and then tell me it wouldn't have killed or maimed my dog? Until the practices change I will not hunt grouse even though I've done it for so many years with my father and enjoy the sport. It's simply not worth the chance of losing my Snap!

I am VERY concerned with the traps that are set in public Hunting Areas! I have never started hunting Grouse with my FIRST pointing dog. The concern being the traps that my dog could find! I would prefer upland hunting and trapping not to coexist at the same time and the same places. At least, modify the rules for the placement of traps that can harm my pointing hunting dog!

MN is out of the question. I have valuable Retrievers that run competitions on private grounds that I can't risk being killed in traps/snairs set on dry ground. Trappers should set their body gripping traps/snares out of reach of dogs or in the water especially when bait is involved. It is horrible that so many dogs have been killed in this fashion and selfish that trappers don't take others outdoor enthusiasts considerations into effect.

I am a Minnesota resident that is concerned about Minnesota regulations that allow dog-killing traps to be set where they can kill hunting dogs. This will be the third year that I stay away from Chippewa National Forest if body-grip traps remain on the ground. I just can not enjoy the experience and will not play roulette with my dog because of these traps. I have stopped purchasing a Minnesota small game license and confine my hunting to a game farm located outside Hudson Wisconsin. A poor substitute for Grouse hunting in Chippewa National Forest. I keep wondering why our Legislators keep passing on HF 456 and SF 452? Twenty five states require body-grip traps to be five feet off the ground or fully submerged in water. Why not join them? Minnesota hunters and their companions need safe access to Minnesota Public Lands.

I did not purchase a small game license in order to hunt grouse the past two years due to the problems with body-hold traps being used in the area I hunt most, which is south and east of International Falls. One of the reasons is the attitude of a couple of trappers I tried to discuss this with, who really don't care about the chance killing of expensive hunting dogs and family pets. I was told by two of them that I should really keep my dog out of the woods and, if I hunt, I should keep my dog within sight at all times which we all know is impossible to do when hunting grouse. The dog will be out of sight either chasing up a bird or retrieving a downed bird and if the dog sticks its head into the trap, the dog could be instantly silenced and killed before it is located (assuming it is located). Even if the dog is alive when located, few dogs can be released in time to save them. Frankly, I don't understand why MN can't require the traps be placed high enough on a tree trunk to prevent these terrible instances. This has been done in Michigan

and has virtually eliminated the dog deaths but has not harmed the trapping industry in the state at all. It has been proven to be a viable solution. I understand the trappers have as much right to be in the woods as the bird hunters (Trappers also need to understand the hunter's have the same rights) but putting the traps on the trees and underwater seems like a very reasonable thing to do to prevent a possible confrontation between an angry dog owner and a trapper. Many hunters have thousands of dollars and countless hours of training invested in their dogs and the dogs are literally family members so when we have a dog killed because we won't take simple, logical steps to prevent a tragedy, we open up the possibility of a confrontation. Not good for either side. As for me, until steps are taken to protect the dogs from these traps, I will continue to take my bird hunting business to another state. Thanks for listening.

Public lands should be available for everyone. I volunteer with the second largest golden retriever rescue organization in the United States. This organization is based in Minnesota and covers the entire state. Most of my fellow volunteers are very nervous about taking their dogs on public lands. Public lands should be available to all residents without undue risk. The Minnesota Trapping Association would have you believe that you can train your dogs to avoid these traps. How ludicrous. My dogs are hunters and would find these traps quickly. I am not against trapping, but I am quickly moving to the point where I would seek to disallow trapping in its entirety if this condition persists. My dogs are my family and I will not put them in harm's way. One of them is a registered therapy dog and does good for many people. It is a shame they cannot enjoy an outing in the woods as they love it so much. I guess public lands belong to the trappers now.

Hello my name is...(from) Vadnais Heights MN. I grew up in Floodwood MN and am a passionate grouse hunter. I have quit grouse hunting after trapping season in fear for the life of my dog. I'm not against trapping at all but there has to be a way for we grouse hunters and the trappers to co-exist in the woods. In my 35 years of grouse hunting I would normally hunt from the opener well into December now I have to stop when trapping begins is that fair?

I am not a trapping person. However, if they are to trap on public lands, couldn't we come up with a way to warn those of us who bird hunt. Perhaps they could leave some map to where there traps are generally located so those of us who hunt with dogs can feel safer about letting our dogs run. Most people I know would try to avoid areas with the traps out. Maybe having some kind of identifying marker as to where the traps are so people could recognize and avoid them would be a solution. I love my dogs and the thought of losing them to a trap is disturbing. There has to be a way that would allow both groups to share public lands safely for people and dogs.

do hunt less because of traps particularly in the northern part of the state during the lynx other (marten, fisher?) seasons. I am more cautious about hunting public land during trapping season while hunting pheasants. It is my understanding that other states have solved this with elevated traps or greater recesses without effecting trapping results. Trappers are our allies and do much needed work by reducing the predators that destroy nests of ducks, pheasants, etc.

I think a balance can be struck. Trappers have the same right to public property as I do. The sets can be changed, or the areas being trapped can be marked, such as areas where bears are being baited. The exact location need not be marked, let us know with in a mile. This will let me make the decision on what to do.

I am a MN resident and hunter. I am very concerned about traps that could injure or kill my dog. I do not currently avoid hunting anywhere, but do not see how the proposed changes to where conibear traps may be set (which seem to already be in place in other neighboring states) restrict trappers rights. As such, I fully support any efforts to keep my hunting dog and devoted companion safe in the field.

it's more than a hunting issue. People walking the woods / hunting sites -- with or without dogs -- run the risk of severe injury too, I was very shocked at your information on ditches. I had no idea that trappers could use them...very scary. My family has moved to use game farms more often to avoid this issue -- not as enjoyable as it used to be....not as sporting either. We also hunt the same areas each year where we are known to the owners and we know the owners ensure a safe environment for dogs. I think the two sides should be able to work this out. MN is known for its rich hunting opportunities. We attract hunters from around the country. We should be able to offer these out-of-towners and our own citizens the safest possible experience.

I want to be able to walk or hunt without worrying about my family pet being killed. A compromise can and should be found.

[Any trapping is inhumane, no matter the species that gets caught.](#)

I am concerned and will reconsider getting a grouse license next season. My Odessa is not just a dog but a hunting partner and member of my family. If regulations don't change I will reconsider purchasing an upland game licenses. Which is unfair to me and my dog but her safety is my number one concern. That will the right rules and regulations trappers and hunters can exits and cohabitate. The current regulations are pro trapper and seem to negate the safety concerns of hunters.

Please end trapping in MN. Its a disgraceful activity in 2014. Traps now litter public lands and cause damage to wildlife and pets as well as immeasurable pain and suffering. Time for them to go.

I am a Minnesota resident . 1. I am concerned about hunting dogs being killed in traps . 2. I personally don't hunt grouse any more because of the trapping threat , I hunt pheasant , but am aware at risks . I have some experience trapping , I know what a conibear trap can do , and how difficult they are to remove ,even from a dead animal .

It is a complicated issue. First of all to me and others I hunt with, it is a non-issue on private property. Dog owners bear all responsibility to check if trapping is being conducted on the land they have permission to hunt. The dog owners would be responsible to make the best decisions to keep their dogs safe. On public property, it sure would be nice if there was a way trappers could alert us dog hunters if they were trapping on a piece of land. This could possibly be done by flagging or sign posting, etc. There is more risk for my dogs when I decide to hunt public property versus private. Public land is where should all collectively work for the best solutions. Dog owners also need to realize that they can't always

take their dogs with them. We own some property with a river running through it and allow fishing along the river. Unfortunately many fisherman feel the need to run their dogs on our land while they fish. This has caused a few cases of problems with our livestock and I would have been well within the law to shoot some dogs. I never did shoot the dogs as I feel the owners needed more of the discipline. I wish all dog owners would realize they should always ask permission to have their dogs on private property for any reason. That is just common courtesy. That leads me to my final thoughts. The private landowner has the rights to say who can and cannot be on their property. It is not fair to take the tools away from a trapper that has secured permission on private property. Body grip traps and snares are lethal and the most humane way to catch animals such as raccoons, skunks, possum, as well as other furbearers. We as dog hunters need to make sure we communicate well with landowners to understand what is being allowed on their property. We have never had a dog/trap issue and have been hunting since the 1980's. Let's all work together to best figure out how to make the public lands safe like the private lands.

I am ashamed of my home state, Minnesota, for not resolving this issue. This is a significant conflict between two user groups: trappers who decided to use legal, but immoral, sets and upland bird hunters, whose dogs are placed in danger by those trappers. Other states have resolved this issue - WHY HASN'T MINNESOTA RESOLVED THIS SIGNIFICANT ISSUE. I feel the responsibility lies with the DNR. Why they don't take steps to resolve this issue is totally beyond me. I've seen them act this way on other issues, so maybe the problem lies with DNR wildlife. Something needs to be done about this issue soon. I have cutback my bird hunting (my sport) because of this issue. I will likely cutback all of my hunting in Minnesota and hunt other states if something is not done about this soon. If the DNR won't do the right thing (and they must know it is the right thing) and ban all types of trapping that can kill dogs, then the Legislature should move forward. Also, I FEEL IT IS OUR GOVERNOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE SOMETHING HAPPENS AND QUICKLY!!!

I am responding by mail, hope this will help. This information should be shared with everybody, not just the people that hunt here. Its not just the people that try to hunt here that have problems with Minnesota trapping policies. Minnesota legislators, the DNR, law agencies have allowed an in some cases covered up know dog killings. Minnesota trappers are allowed to use traps that can and do kill dogs. Snares kill dogs adding problems with heavy cable, springs loaded locking devices etc. Special toll and equipment need do cut, release traps and snares. Let's make Minnesota a safe place for dogs. A concerned Minnesotan.

On December 29th 1987, I lost my first dog to an illegally set conibear trap. Having your 3 year old hunting dog literally die in your arms is something I hope to never experience again nor would I want anyone else to have the same experience. It something I've never gotten over and I probably never will.

I have seriously curtailed the number of days that I hunt in Minnesota each fall. I don't hunt here after the trapping season starts. Instead, I travel ten hours to hunt in North Dakota. I would normally hunt grouse and pheasants in Minnesota 15-20 days per year. Since I came upon a dog-killing trap in the grouse woods (three years ago) my hunting days in Minnesota are

down to two to three. I go to great expense (time and money) to travel out of state where it's safer for my dogs. My research indicates that other states have dealt with this issue in a relatively satisfactory manner – either elevating the traps or making them legal only for under water sets.

I've had a dog caught in one before and luckily I was able to release her from the trap. I can't imagine any one of my dogs being killed by one of these. There isn't a hunting trip I go out in MN that now concerns me about these traps. The fact they allow this potential danger to exist is beyond me. Every location I hunt I ask if there may be traps and if there is any suspicion or reason to believe there is, I resist. Even public land is high risk and that doesn't make sense to me. Once again, I am losing faith in our DNR and politicians to make the right decisions for our state. If these were traps for humans, no one would think twice about allowing them. The fact dogs are a vital part of our family these days, this shouldn't be allowed. My guess is that our decision makers will again wait for hundreds of dogs to be killed and then wonder how they didn't make the right decision when they had the chance. Just the fear of them while walking around(not just hunting) is devastating to me. It better not be a dog of mine.

Not hunt many areas. These traps are causing an unnecessary fear amongst those I hunt with...kids especially...they are very hesitant to go hunting in some cases. Never was location an issue, now we have to be certain to not forget to ask private land owners about the possibility of traps. They should not be allowed on public land, or else required to have the location registered on the DNR website for the public to view. Then they should be required to have highly visible, secure markings.

SOMETHING NEEDS TO GET DONE. TRAPPERS WHO ARE MAKING MONEY OFF THEIR SPORT, NEED TO BE MORE OPEN TO CHANGES, OR THEIR SPORT WILL CEASE TO EXIST IN YEARS TO COME, IF DOGS KEEP DYING IN THESE TRAPS. BECAUSE OF THE ATTITUDES OF SOME OF THE TRAPPERS, THEY HAVE LOST THE SUPPORT/RESPECT OF MANY HUNTERS, INCLUDING MINE.

. I just invested in a \$1000 puppy and I am concerned about his welfare with trappers using 220 conibears without better restrictions.

I just invested in a \$1000 puppy and I am concerned about his welfare with trappers using 220 conibears without better restrictions.

The Dog Protection Bill needs to be passed. I have become very sensitive to this problem to the point that I did not take my dog Grouse hunting this past fall for this very reason. I believe that other hunters may feel the same. If that is true, then many areas where Grouse hunting is a boost to the local economy, have suffered a loss of revenue because of this. I think this type of

argument can be added to the list of reasons why the Dog Protection Bill needs to be passed. There may be more support from lawmakers when they can be seen helping the economy by changing the law.

Traps that are capable of killing a dog should not be allowed – there is no reason traps of this capacity need to be used in MN and there needs to be strict regulations put in place

I have been an upland bird hunter since I was 12 years old. I love it. However, I love my dog more. As a result, I have scaled back my hunting trips to only locations that don't allow trapping i.e. game farms, and specific locations in SD.

People don't use Conibears because it requires a smaller skill set as the website suggests. For rabbits I use a 160 that I lodge in brush piles without bait as it is the best option. As far as 220s are concerned, I rarely use mine as they are dangerous for the dogs, and when I do, I have them positioned in the trees in cubbies with the opening facing upwards. No dog is getting in that. I also mark my sets with bright pink flagging to allow any dog owner to know where traps are located. Anyone trapping on private land without permission should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Any dog caught in a trap on private land that does not belong there is the dog's fault. Should we ban tree stands since there are falling deaths and injuries from them every year? Ban guns since someone seems to shoot themselves in the foot or someone else on accident? We all deserve the right to pursue sport in the woods, be it hunting with dogs or trapping. It's a fine line and everyone needs to be respectful of the other. I would hate for a movement to begin to ban our dogs from public hunting lands due to this movement. Lastly, to suggest suing someone for legally placing a trap (yes, suing someone for following the law) if a dog gets killed in it for financial gain is outrageous!

As a Minnesota dog owner, bird hunter, I have great concern for traps killing my dog. As the evolution of trap mechanics has advanced into neck breaking technology I am convinced those weapons have no place in the countryside. I limit my fall hunting to areas where the landowner does not allow trapping. I have stopped going to northern Minnesota for fall grouse hunting....just too dangerous for the dog. The loss of CRP and habitat in general, bird hunting in Minnesota is basically exercise for the dog and myself.....and great times afield. The added danger of neck breaking traps robs both the dog and myself of hunting without the threat of unavoidable consequences. Only way to definitely avoid the threat is to stay home. Are the system of DNR trails safe for dog walking? I hope our legislators understand the impact that trapping has on those that might seek a pleasant fall day afield.

I trapped for many years and at that time, if memory serves, the conibear was illegal to use above ground if it was a 220 or larger. It is hard enough for one who traps to release the trap to extract a target animal let alone a pet owner trying to release a dog. It is basically 100 % fatal to a pet if caught in one. There needs to be a few rules on using these traps that keeps dogs from getting caught. The DNR has not had favorable press in recent years and a simple rule to keep these traps from catching dogs would be a step in the right direction for them. There are way more hunters with dogs in the woods than there are trappers trapping so why not protect the majority instead of appease the minority?

It is utterly ridiculous and unfair that those of us with dogs, who outnumber trappers, can't get a fair shake at keeping our dogs safe. We are not anti-trapping, just anti-dead dog. For goodness sake, why is this so difficult? I should not have to stop exercising my right to hunt or to walk my dog on public lands because of irresponsible trapping practices, and I am furious that the DNR and the legislature are still unable to resolve this at this late date. PS. It WILL affect my voting!

I am a true outdoors man. I am not against trapping. We all have our love for our hobbies. I have lived just outside of Duluth all my life. I have a family cabin just East of Cotton, MN and have enjoyed all the public hunting land in St Louis County whether it be Potlatch, MN Power, St Louis County and/or State of MN land. We are truly the luckiest people in the country to have this and we need to find ways so we can all use it for our hobbies that share this land. - - I had my yellow lab get caught in a leg hold trap just off a grouse trail 3 years ago. He was not hurt in the mishap and I was almost back to my truck so I wrote a short note to the trapper and left it tapped to his sprung trap saying I was sorry that I messed with his set and that it was my dog that sprung it. I left my cell phone number and name on the note and the trapper actually called me the next day apologizing and wondering how the dog was. I thanked him for the call praised him for taking the time to follow up. He was very glad that I took the time to write a note so that he knew someone just wasn't tripping his traps. I was out hunting the next weekend not thinking too much about it. About 2 weeks later my best friend called me and said that his older 13 year old Brittany didn't come home when he let the dogs out at the end of the evening. She didn't turn up by the next morning so we spent the entire day looking for her. After the 2nd day with no luck we had many bad thoughts going through our heads. 3 days after her disappearance a truck came down his rural driveway and it was a local neighbor boy that had his dead dog in a 160 conibear trap. He had a trap set in a 5-gallon bucket on the ground with beaver meat in it and guess what? - - Common sense told me that I was done bird hunting in Northern MN when the trapping season starts. It's too bad because that 2 week period before gun deer season and after the end of all the deer seasons was enjoyable as well. I've read what our neighbor states have done to cut down the threat of dog deaths but I really do not have the knowledge to comment on that. The problem is with any of our great outdoor hobbies we all put up with the slobbs that seem to break any rule that is out there to get the upper edge over the next person. What ever happened to common sense and ethics. I read the Cuffs & Collars section every week just because I know a handfull of our local wardens. It just amazes me what is going on out there. If you spend enough time outdoors you see it all.

Are you sure you were not a comedian for 30 years? I'd be ashamed to be associated with your group. You obviously did not learn much working for the DNR. I no longer own hunting dogs, but did for over 25 years. I asked permission and always asked about trapping and snaring activities in areas I wanted to hunt. Trappers and bird/hunting dog owners can co-exist but you obviously are one track minded in this area. Not all lands are available to trappers either and we as sportsmen and women have to respect landowner wishes too. I suggest getting out and do a lot more asking to secure your hunting areas....or buy some land. - - I trap responsibly and have for over 45 years, most of which was in Minnesota. I have had no issues with dogs over all these years.

I have called my Legislatures, DNR and trappers Association all gave me the run around. I believe that trappers should have to post a warning sign of traps on a trail . . . way ahead of where they are located. I think the sign should be large [24/24] red, with large size font in reflective letters, so hunters can see them ahead on the trail.[I loved to see flashing red lights also but know that is a bit much.]They have a right to trap, but I have right to protect my dog and to hunt safely.

I am a MN resident, hunter, and dog owner. I am very concerned about the lack of reasonable trapping regulations in MN that could protect dogs from the dog-killing type traps. - - Do dog-killing traps cause me not to hunt or to change where I go? **Absolutely! I no longer go in Minnesota.** What little bird hunting I now do is done in So. Dakota. I would add also, that **my hunting dollars are now spent in So. Dakota.** I don't even buy a MN Small Game license anymore. - - I have spent considerable money to get a well bred bird dog, and countless hours training as well as dollars spent for professional training. I do not regret a single minute or dollar but it is all unnecessarily jeopardized by the danger of dog-killing traps and the absence of rules or laws in Minnesota to regulate how they are set. That is why **my dog is not and never will be hunted in Minnesota until the rules change.** - - This must be affecting the economy of Minnesota, especially up north. I talk to many dog owners, and I know I am not alone in these concerns and how it effects where I go to hunt and spend my recreational money. I am fortunate to have cabin property in St. Louis County, right in the heart of the some of the best grouse country around. Yet I do not go there to hunt. - - In the outdoors, my dog is my loyal partner and best friend. No excuses: **a good partner doesn't let the other partner down.** The dog is a dearly loved part of our family. Her unnecessary loss would be devastating. **As a responsible owner,** I would never send her out to run in the "mine field" that is currently Minnesota's hunting environment.

I do not think anything will be done until some Minnesota Legislature has one of his or hers dog killed by one of these traps.

I hope they ban these types of traps completely and actually ban trapping all together.

I am an avid upland hunter and am very concerned that my dog will get caught in a trap that could kill her. I have had two dogs get caught in leg hold traps. Lucky they weren't killing traps or I may have lost them. I do not hunt late season on public lands because I worry about trapping. Dog owners have the right to legally go on public lands without fear of their dog getting injured or killed in a trap.

I have had my hunting dog almost killed in a conibear trap. These traps are not compatible with bird hunting with dogs.

Very glad to hear the trapping issue is being raised. I hope some changes can be made. However I'm sure you know how stubborn the Trappers Assoc. can be, how hard it is to get the legislature off its ass, and how reluctant D.N.R. is to open up the issue because they always feared that changes may go beyond what it desired. I was concerned about it for years and made it a point to always keep my dog in sight. I had no problem with leg-hold traps and released my dog and misc. wildlife (including a wolf) often. But I disapprove of conibears and snares. No longer a Minnesota resident (moved to Montana in 2000). I have the same concerns here. A few years ago there was a bill here to ban trapping on public land. It was defeated, but there was considerable support. It bothers me that many non-hunters' dogs are at risk while they are out for walks. Very few non-hunters have any idea of how to release a dog from these traps and they die in their owners arms. I spent my career defending trapping, but I am rapidly changing my opinion because of the preponderance of unethical trappers who have no respect for the rights of others to recreate on our public lands.

I quit hunting any public land up in the Bemidji area when the bobcat trapping season opens at the end of November. If I want to hunt more, I drive out of state or hunt only on private land where the land-owner does not allow trapping. Friends of mine used to make an annual trip to hunt grouse in December, but they no longer make the trip. Besides grouse hunting we would also go out to dinner in town and the wives would shop in Bemidji stores. That money is no longer being spent in this community which depends on tourism. -- Although I have never trapped, I never had anything against trappers. After hearing the arrogance of trappers who seem to think they should be allowed to do whatever they want on public land and the hell with the rest of us, I am very angry that the DNR has proven to be so spine-less on this issue. There are over 100,000 upland hunters, most hunting with dogs, and only a couple thousand trappers using these deadly conibears, yet somehow they are calling the shots. I now despise trappers. If a dog of mine or one of my friends ever gets killed by a trapper, we have lined up a lawyer to sue the trapper in civil court. Our lawyer is one of the best in the state, specializing in animal

cruelty issues. After taking the trapper to the cleaners, we have also been advised they we would have a strong case to also sue the DNR. The DNR has ample data to know that this risk is avoidable and has done nothing. We would definitely also sue the DNR.

My dog was caught (by the neck, a 5 gallon bucket set) in a 220 conibear trap in the fall of 2001 or 2002 and survived. The trap was a legal set on my private land that was un-posted, only about 4 - 500 feet from my seasonal cabin and about 20 - 30 feet off of the Height of Land Forest Road in Becker Cty mn.

Conservation Officer Greg Spaulding was informed of this. It is unknown if a report was ever filed.

Trappers have been around here just as long as pets so I can't complain even though I am an avid hunter with a golden I am just careful where I hunt and have never run into a trap set in over20 years of running a dog

There was no good reason to allow traps or snares that have the potential to kill hunting dogs to be set. I would not support nor would I vote for a legislator who supports the present trapping regulations which allows this type of unsportsman like activity. I grew up trapping and I am developing antitrapping sentiments.

It is my belief that many trappers are also hunters, and that most trappers would be concerned about the safety of dogs. However, it appears that this very serious issue is not being solved voluntarily by the trappers. As a result, my opinion is that trapping regulations need to be established that prohibit or substantially limit the use of these types of traps. My opinion is that it is immoral, and should be illegal, for dog-killing traps to be used by trappers. My dogs are not only hunting dogs, but they are also members of my family. I am sure many other dog owners feel the same way. This practice needs to be stopped immediately! I have discussed this issue with my son, who is also a hunter with dogs, and who used to be a trapper. He has informed me that there is no way that I could release a dog from such a trap in time to save the dog's life. -- Please feel free to share this information with the Minnesota DNR, the Minnesota Legislature, the Minnesota Trappers Association, or to include it in future articles in Minnesota Outdoor News.
