



January 28, 2020

Mr. David Rael, President
Wyoming Game and Fish Commission
5400 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82006

Dear Commissioner Rael,

We write to you today to formally request that the Wyoming Game and Fish Department trapping regulations be opened for amendment this year. Wyoming Untrapped (WU) understands that trapping regulations are scheduled for review in 2022. We request earlier consideration of changes to address increasing land-use conflicts across Wyoming, and specifically in Teton and Fremont Counties.

The Issue

The incidental trapping of pets resulting in injuries and death continues to increase on our public lands. In the wake of these tragedies, current WGFD regulations leave recreationalist believing that there is no or little accountability in the sport of trapping and that there is "no safe place for recreationalist in Wyoming." This dynamic is bad for the sport of trapping and bad for Wyoming.

Over the last several years, WU has recorded 57 reported dog trapping incidents in Wyoming. Just recently, two trapping incidents took place in a week. Just a couple days before the Christmas holiday 2019, a dangerous trapline was set in the Cache Creek area. In this case, the trapper was cited for two violations and appeared in the Teton County court last week. A few days later, on January 4, 2020, a beloved pet, "Mac," was caught in a lethal power snare and killed in Lander. When the community asked for action on Mac's case, some of the WGFD staff had never heard of these new snares, increasing the danger on our public lands. Emotions are high, and Wyoming residents are now reaching out to you and their electeds.

Proposed Solution

To avoid future incidents, we propose the establishment of criteria to guide trapping closures on "highly used public recreation areas," beginning with areas that have documented conflict histories, such as Teton County and Fremont County. Examples of "a highly used public area" are Cache Creek, Game Creek, and Old Pass Road in Teton County. Today, the overall use of the Cache Creek trail system continues to rise and is estimated as high as 1526 daily, with an annual average of 400 people per day per a trail counter data summary 2019.

A Reasonable Proposal-Using WGFD Work

We'll begin by revisiting the 2015 WGFD-approved Cache Creek Closure Proposal to build a reasonable, actionable solution for your consideration. In 2015, following several pet trapping incidents, the WGFD approved a proposed full closure of trapping in the Cache Creek drainage. The proposal proceeded through a public process with full support from our community. The WGF Commission declined the opportunity to act at that time. We believe that action is needed now.

Beginning with the 2015 proposal that garnered so much support, Wyoming Untrapped will work with Teton, Fremont, and other County public lands users, WGFD staff, the Wyoming State Trappers Association (invited), and other organizations as appropriate, to author a proposal for public comment and your consideration in July.

Please consider adding this proposal to your agenda for the July 2020 Wyoming Game and Fish Commission meeting, preceded by the public comment process this spring. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Lisa Robertson
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