

JANUARY TRAPLINE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE

MICHIGAN TRAPPERS AND PREDATOR CALLERS ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S REPORT Joe Velchansky, Sr

Hello members! As I write this we are ending the year 2024. As always when we look at a year in review there are always one or more items that stand out. This year has been no exception. Probably the top item was the NRC decision to close Coyote season for three months in the spring. As of today we are waiting for the judge to make the next move. It's kind of a hurry up and wait.

This year for myself, it has been a whirlwind. In August I was elected as President of the MTPCA. Saying I was a little nervous is an understatement. I've been an active board member for more years than I can remember. But being President, I feel the old saying "The Buck Stops Here" is applied to myself. I believe as President any decisions the board of directors makes should be on the shoulders of the President. I am blessed with a strong board of directors. They commit countless hours volunteering each year. There are people from time to time who will criticize how we as board members manage the affairs and make decisions for the MTPCA. The only response, I have, to those critics is, to step up.

We are in the season of fur sales. I know, I know, fur prices are dismal. But, I have witnessed at fur sales, well handled prime fur will bring a fair price. Even in this low fur market. Our next fur sale will be February 8th, at the Battle Creek Sportsman's Club. I hope to see a bunch of you there. Fur sales are a great way to see how other folks handle fur. Also, it's a good way to see what buyers are wanting. Always there are plenty of like-minded people to talk Trapping and Hunting with.

There are a number of things I would like to implement in 2025. One of them is for members and new members to be able to sign up for membership or renew their membership on our MTPCA web site. Shane Hammond (treasurer) is working on this as I write. He is waiting on approval from the Square account folks.

One other program I would like to start is a "Trappers Workshop". This would be very similar to a Trappers Education class. It would be an introduction to Trapping for beginners and a refresher for those with Trapping experience. Each Workshop would have the same agenda/program for instructors to follow.

I have made it a point to try to make each Sportsman's caucus breakfast and each NRC meeting that I can. These are a great opportunity to meet legislators, senators and top folks from the DNR and many other user groups. It's a way to build relationships with all these people to help us work for what we all want. A healthy, sustainable renewable resource.

Your friend,

Joe Velchansky sr. MTPCA President

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Vice President Report Carl Roeller

As we close out 2024 and move into 2025, I am looking forward to and preparing for the upcoming predator calling tournaments- both as a participant and as a representative for MTPCA at the events promoting the organization and recruiting new members. I am also looking forward to working with Sportspersons Ministries on a youth predator hunting workshop. This workshop will be a time for registered youth to learn more about predator hunting and trapping. It will combine how-to seminars and instructions with real field experiences.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy new year! -Carl Roeller

NTA Report Kenneth (Bernie) Burzynski.

Hello Michigan Trappers,

Hope all had a Merry Christmas the new year is here.

As A NTA rep for Michigan I will give you heads up NTA dues are going up to \$40 this year. Michigan has the most NTA members in the NTA roughly around 950 give or take. I would like to see this at 1000. Please join up, sure fur prices are down that's part of the economy. So, invest in your future, by joining up today!

As of this writing, Bob Steinmetz has stepped down from the position, of the NTA director for Michigan (*UPTA*) I cannot say enough about Bob and his devotion and loyalty towards trapping thank you Bob. Bob and ED Lumborg have built the member ship of the NTA to this strength let's not lose this. Taking Bob's place is Jeremy Laakso. I look forward to working with Jeremy and move the NTA member ship to 1000 strong. When Jeremy and I sit in with other NTA director's, at meetings when we speak hopefully, they listen at a 1000 strong. So go to the NTA website and sign up. Some of us are getting long in the tooth as seniors now is time to be a life member. There is a lot of MTPCA members that, as of yet, are not members. Don't let the fight come to us believe me it's coming. Jeremy and I are always open for suggestions to benefit the NTA and the passion for trapping. Get a hold of us with your thought 's let us know. Don't let

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a few volunteers do all the work for you get involved Move forward not backwards learn from the past move ahead.

As of this letter I have not set a trap at this time life and family have priority. Hope to get on the board sometime in January 25.

Happy New Year to all. Remember mentor someone trapping

NTA DIRECTOR MTPCA

KEN "BERNIE" BURZYNSKI

FTA Report/Secretary Report Craig Schafer

MTPCA Secretary

Craig Schafer.

Meeting minutes will continue to go out in a timely fashion.

I have stepped down from the FTA Representative position. It was an honor.

Jim Tate has stepped up and is the NEW, FTA Representative.

An order of new merchandise has been put in. Merchandise will be on sale at the shows the MTPCA sets up at.

February 8, 2025 Saturday. MTPCA Fur Sale. Battle Creek Sportsman Club. 10AM

April 12, 2025 Saturday. MTPCA Fur Sale. Gaylord Sportsman Club. 10 AM

July 17-19, 2025 NTA Rendezvous. Harrisonburg VA. Go to the NTA web page for more information.

July 25-27, 2025. FTA Rendezvous. Spencer Iowa. Go to the FTA web page for more information.

August 15-16, 2025. MTPCA Rendezvous, Evart Michigan. More information to come.

MUCC Director Report-Mark Earl

Mark Earl MUCC Director

Editors Note: MUCC Convention is right around the corner. If you have any comments, questions or concerns about convention and how the MTPCA is going to represent at convention please reach out to Mark Earl or any other board member.

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Region 1 Vice President Ed Kramer

Hey Trappers and Predator Callers.

It's been a strange fall and winter up in the Upper Peninsula. But it's nice and sunny here in Florida see you sometime in May.

Northern Great lakes Fur Harvesters Annual Fundraiser dinner is February 22, 2025 at Audie's Restaurant @ 314 N Nicolet Street Mackinaw City, MI. The public is welcome

Contact Information.

Dave Spencer at 906 322 2554.

Mark Spencer at 906 430 8804.

Thanks Ed Kramer

Region 2 Vice President Dale Thorne

Editors Note: Any questions, comments or concerns about Region 2 , the northern Lower Peninsula please reach out to Dale Thorne. Dale is very active and does a great job at getting back with people and leading them to the correct person on the board if need be.

Region 3 Vice President Vacant

Editors Note: We are currently looking for a member in good standing that has felt the call to serve his/her fellow predator callers and trappers by sitting on the board as the Region 3 Vice President. You must be a member in good standing and must live within Region 3 the Lower Peninsula. Jack Longstreet Region 3 Regional Director has provided 2 articles that will follow this note.

Regional Director Zone 3- Jack Longstreet

Trapping season is in full swing, hope all of you are out in the woods enjoying nature and checking off your bucket list. With the weather changing from snow to rain and rain to snow it's been tough to keep set's working well.

With a recent episode of poor disposal of coyotes, be reminded that utilizing your catch or finding someone that will utilize it is your responsibility and respect for the animals. Leaving your catch in a ditch in public gives all of us a bad reputation.

The fur sale in Clare was short, prices about the same as last year. Next fur sale is in Battle Creek at the sportsman club on February 8. Watch the MTPCA Facebook page for the rules and dates for upcoming sales.

May your chains be tight and your health be good.

Public Relations Director Merle Jones

Hello 2025!

As I started to write this my natural tendency went towards recapping everything that happened in 2024, trying to bring everyone “up to speed” on things and generally all around rehashing what has been. Then I deleted it. I deleted that for two reasons. 1. It would take me all afternoon to get all the pertinent info on all of the subjects and make sure it was all correct. 2. Most importantly WE need to look forward. All last year’s information has already been shared. I want to talk about what we are going to do!

WE are going to work hard increasing MTPCA membership and improving operational efficiency. Per the MTPCA Bylaws, Article I, Section III:

“The purpose of this organization shall be to promote sound conservation legislation and administrative procedures; to save and faithfully defend from waste the national resources of Michigan; to promote sound environmental education programs; and to promote a continued annual fur harvest using the best tools presently available for that purpose.”

This doesn’t magically happen on its own just because we have an association, it requires effort.

Obviously financial resources are a huge part of the formula, and some would argue the most important part. I contend the most important resource is PEOPLE, our membership. Obviously, a larger membership means more dues being collected, which in turn helps with the financial challenges, but the total sum of our dues will probably never be sufficient for all the challenges we face. The true strength of OUR association is its collective ability to solve problems and be productive, but that requires involvement from everyone, at every level. Some members may only have a few hours a year they can give, some may have a few hours a day, but all those hours add up. I challenge everyone, for the sake of what you hold dear, for the sake of our association, and above all, for the sake of our natural resources, GET INVOLVED. Reach out to any of our board members, share your interests and skill sets, let your passion be known. Promote MTPCA at whatever level you can, but remember at the end of the day word of mouth is one of the most cost effective and powerful forms of marketing. If everyone of us recruited just ONE new member in 2025, and we all did that again in ‘26? ‘27?

WE are also going to apply true natural science to everything WE do to defend our natural resources.

The need for clear and definitive separation of natural science vs social science is paramount to our

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purpose. Emotion is the primary strategy of the preservationists (anti-hunters) as they constantly manipulate their narrative in attempts to cloud reality. Ballot box biology is their other primary weapon, hence the reason for Proposal G. They want everyone to believe that decisions about our natural resources should just be made based upon a popularity contest. Unfortunately for them the scientific reality is that hammers are hard, they could get 90% of the voters to buy into some hogwash marketing and say differently, but that's not going to change what happens when you hit your thumb. The reality all of us need to face is that truth applies to us as well, perhaps even more so, because adhering to the facts of natural science is THE solution to their emotional rhetoric.

I'm excited about 2025, I hope you are as well.

Fur Sale Director Report Calvin Miller

Next Fur sale is February 8th at Battle Creek Sportsmen Club @ 10am

Membership Secretary Report Steve Campbell

Hello trappers and Predator Callers,

This is my final report as membership secretary for the MTPCA. I stepped down as of January 1st and the board has accepted Anthony Satkowiak as my replacement. I wish him the best of luck in helping to grow and update our membership. I will remain on the board as *Trapline* Editor. Any questions, comments or concerns about membership, magazine subscriptions please don't hesitate to reach out to Anthony as he will handle those from now on. I look forward to seeing what he can do!

Tight Chains and Straight Shooting,

Steve Campbell

Convention Coordinator Report Jon Southworth & Jocelyn Southworth

Hope everyone had a wonderful holiday. I have one thing to add, get your skillet throwing technique down for this year's skillet & opossum throwing contest. I've had a skillet & Opossum

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made for this years competition. It's going to be a good year. Hope everyone has stayed safe and had a great trapping season. Stay tuned more info to come in Traplines to come.

Jon

Landowner Assistance Director Matt Johnson

Editors Note: *If you are a landowner in need of assistance please reach out to Matt Johnson, if you are trapper that is willing and able to cover a certain area for landowner assistance please also reach out to Matt Johnson to be put on the list.*

Predator Caller Outreach Mitchell McEachern

Editors Note: *Mitch is hard at work working on getting the PayPal Link up on our Website for the Donation Fund to the Legal Defense Fund as well as putting in a link to pay for memberships with an automatic renewal system on our website as well. Mitch is also running point on the **Meet Me Monday** section of our Facebook Page so that our members can put faces to the names of the board.*

The following is an article from Justin Tomei that was originally published in the MUCC's Michigan Out-of-Doors Magazine

Back to College: Fur Trappers of America Trappers College Part Deux

Back to school. Back to school, to prove to Dad that I'm not a fool. I got my lunch

packed up, my boots tied tight, I hope I don't get in a fight.

Now the esteemed Billy Madison was going back to K-12 when he sang that tune, but I

recently went back to college, Trappers College.

What is Trappers College, you ask? The best answer comes straight from the host's

mouth:

Fur Takers of America (FTA) Trapper's College is the only one of its kind in the

world. The college provides six days of in the field, hands-on training with some of the

best trappers in the world serving as instructors.

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The field experience is backed up with classroom instruction to provide the most extensive training for both beginners and experts. Class placement is based on your level of experience and needs.

What they fail to mention in that summary is it is six long days. They do not mess around at Trappers College. You will get your money's worth, and you will learn so much, especially going in green like I was.

I had taken trappers ed here at home, I knew the tools, the general idea, the regs (for Michigan anyway). I knew how to talk the talk more than a random member of the public for sure. But I had never set traps for critters, never caught anything before.

That was all fixing to change as I arrived and checked in on Saturday. While not a required day the highlight was sitting with one of the instructors in the men's dorm and hearing stories about wolf trapping in Canada.

Day One, Dyeing and Waxing

On the first day, we had a few objectives.

1. Check out traps and gear if necessary, which it was for me.
2. Inspect traps with an instructor. The idea here was to ensure they were in good working order and had the requisite number of swivels.
3. Dye and wax traps. Again, you go through your traps with an instructor, and dye and wax traps as necessary.

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4. Making a pair of snares. We would later use these snares in the field.

5. Interview and group placement. Every student was interviewed by instructors and

placed into one of five groups. I was placed along with 15 other folks in Group

One, the novices.

After that was all done, we had lessons on trap modification and repair, the property we

would be trapping on, and the effective use of lures and attractants. Off to bed, the real

work starts on day two.

Day Two, Setting traps and dodging poison ivy (unsuccessfully)

Our second full day set the routine for the rest of the week. Breakfast at 6:30 a.m., on

the road by about 7:15 a.m. We would get to property one and begin instruction.

That day the instructors, Charlie, Dave, Dan, and Christy, showed us how to make

proper dirt hole and flat sets, as well as how to use snares. Once that was over, the

students practiced each set and were individually critiqued by the instructors.

The instructors spoke to the group and asked about our goals for the week. I wanted to

learn the basics, lacking any trapping mentor, and be able to go home and trap some

coons and maybe a coyote or two with my daughter. But I was also sent there to learn

how to be a more effective advocate for trapping in Michigan.

I also wanted to beat MUCC's CEO Amy Trotter's catch total from the 2023 college.

Amy caught three coons during her week, so I had some work to do.

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Which leads to why I was there in the first place. Last year Amy was sent to college by the Michigan Trapper and Predator Caller Association (MTPCA). They felt that it is easier for Amy, and by extension MUCC, to do our jobs with a more practical and real experience with trapping.

In 2024 MTPCA decided it was my turn. Turned out to be one of the most fun weeks of my life.

After lunch and goal setting, we were sent off to make our first sets.

Most of the land we were on is not even open to land trapping, we were granted special educational permits from the State of Indiana, and we reported our results to the state.

We spent the next couple of hours making our sets. I set out a few footholds and two snares. We were mostly targeting raccoons, but the property has produced possums, coyotes, red fox, groundhogs, and more in past years.

When the group was done, we headed back to camp, arriving around 3 p.m. for lessons for the remainder of the evening. Mandatory lessons wrapped up at 9 p.m. and the optional lessons, at 10 p.m.

This schedule was the template for the rest of the week.

Day Three, rise and shine, it's raccoon o'clock!

We arrived at property one, and after a short briefing, the students were sent out to

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check our sets. We did not have to go far as one woman had a coon in a trap visible from where we parked.

I had a bit further of a walk, first snare, nothing. My first foothold was sprung, but nothing in it. I reset and keep walking. The second snare was a catch, I had a nice healthy coon in a snare. My other foothold was also sprung with nothing in it.

Students were not allowed to dispatch any critters, so we called the instructor to our area to dispatch the animals we had caught.

After that part was done, I took to asking why my traps missed. The most likely explanation from the instructors was that the trap just wasn't bedded well enough in the exceptionally dry and sandy soil.

We finished up, took some group photos, and moved on.

We arrived at property two, and similar to the prior day we received instruction before being unleashed. This property did not have as much corn on it, but there was still some good critter sign. What it lacked in corn it made up for in poison ivy, most of the group picked some up by the end of the week.

In addition to more foothold traps, each student put out a 220 conibear, and a couple dog proof traps.

I found what I thought were a few good spots, and set my traps, but had one left. I wanted to try something different. I got a ride to the far end of the property and set up a

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triangle set, which Charlie had just taught us, hoping for a coyote.

After the work was done it was back to camp for the evening lessons.

Day Four, A possum in hand is worth two in the bush

Time to check more traps.

We head to property one, and success! I had a possum in one of the footholds I missed on the previous day. The woman trapping in my area also had some success, so we called an instructor, reset our traps, and moved on.

It was my first successful foothold catch, and I was quite pleased as I felt confident in that location, knowing it would pay off if I did my job. It still amazes me that of all the places that possum could go in the world, I got him to step in a two-inch circle.

We arrived at property two and my checks were quick. I had no action at any of my sets, I cleaned up as necessary and waited at the vehicles for the rest of the group.

It was time to get in the water.

We did not have a lot of time left in the day, but we wanted to get some water sets out.

Sadly, being strapped for time, we set our traps densely and close to our access point.

There would be time for filler sets on Thursday.

Day Five, the bitter smell of being skunked

No, I did not catch a skunk. I did however learn you cannot say you were skunked when trapping, lest people think you caught and were subsequently sprayed by said skunk.

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Both properties and the river led to no catches for me on this day. I did add some traps to promising water spots and headed back to the truck.

Today was ice cream day.

The entire college invaded the small town of Mongo, IN, this town was basically one intersection and didn't even have a blinky light. My kind of place. We met for some ice cream, cool off, and we had to look ridiculous basically blocking the entire general store parking lot.

Back to camp for evening lessons.

Day Six, a tie goes to the employee

Last day, the score was 3-2 Trotter. I have three chances left to beat her!

We get out at property one, this time with all the equipment we need to pull our sets and set off.

I got to my first foothold and success! I have a beautiful coon. The rest of the sets were empty, I helped a fellow student, and we moved on.

Property two was a loser as I failed to get anything on the entire property, whomp whomp.

There was one chance left.

We arrive at the river, I go to my sets, what wonderous critter will I behold?

Well, nothing in any of my sets. There was a large coon in a fellow student's trap, which

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they released. I pulled my remaining river sets, and we headed back to camp.

Final score: Tomei 3-Trotter 3.

We got back to camp, cleaned and checked in our borrowed gear, then headed to the next lesson.

The entire college met at the pavilion, where we learned to skin and flesh all manner of critters. This session was a bit freer flowing, and you got to partake in whatever critters you wanted, to the extent that you wanted.

I unfortunately was advised to stay hands off, with some open wounds on my wrists, but

I still took in the proper ways to handle coon, mink, red fox, bobcat, and beaver.

After cleaning up and getting some dinner it was time for the test.

Yes, a real test.

Naturally, I aced it.

The entire group took the Indiana Trapper's Education Test, before going into our

lesson on fur grading, and general fur fun. My favorite was the hot pink dyed and

sheered beaver pelt. I showed a picture of the hot pink beaver to my daughter, who

asked if we could trap one and do that with it. I promised we could certainly try!

Day 7, Homeward Bound

This week was packed full of good information, and Saturday was no different. We split

off into a few groups and hit up some quicker, round-robin-style lessons. The pig brig

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was the highlight for me, as its low-techness but effectiveness was impressive.

Basically, it is a net trap that trappers use to catch entire herds of feral hogs. According

to our instructors, it is wickedly effective.

After our last lessons, we all gathered in the cafeteria for graduation.

Afterward, we said our goodbyes and pointed our cars towards home.

What did we learn?

After my week I would say all my goals, apart from beating Amy, were accomplished. I

learned the basic practical skills needed to do some trapping myself when I got home.

The college was more than that. Sure, they taught us how to be effective and productive

trappers, but more importantly there was a dedicated and substantial focus on being

effective and productive stewards of trapping.

With the knowledge I learned I will be more effective in my role lobbying for the interests

of Michigan's trappers, and better represent my trapping members.

Lastly, and I pointed this out to my four instructors, they did not create one trapper that

week, they created two. I got home that afternoon and immediately started sharing what

I learned with my daughter, including showing her how setting traps worked in the

backyard.

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***Thank you to the MTPCA and FTA for the opportunity, it was a once-in-a-lifetime
experience, I am grateful I had it.***

To learn more about Fur Takers of America visit <https://www.furtakersofamerica.com/>

To learn more about the MTPCA visit <https://mtpca.com/>



Author with the racoon he trapped on the last day.



Group 1 with their first day's catch.



Group 1 getting instruction on snares from instructor Christy Miller



The entire college at evening lessons.



Author with MTPCA board member, and fellow Trappers College student Jim Tate

MICHIGAN TRAPPER AND PREDATOR CALLERS ASSOCIATION

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS-MEMBER OR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER OF MICHIGAN TRAPPER AND PREDATOR CALLERS ASSOCIATION AND MAJORING IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT OR CLOSELY RELATED FIELD.

I. PERSONAL DATA

NAME _____ PHONE NUMBER _____

PRESENT ADDRESS _____

PERMANENT ADDRESS _____

II. EDUCATIONAL RECORD

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDED _____ GRADUATION DATE _____

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY YOU ARE ATTENDING/PLANNING TO ATTEND _____

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY ADDRESS _____

CLASS STATUS NEXT FALL (CIRCLE ONE) FRESHMAN SOPHOMORE JUNIOR SENIOR GRADUATE STUDENT

EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE _____ CURRENT GPA _____

MAJOR _____ MINOR _____

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III. BACKGROUND

ARE YOU A CURRENT MEMBER OF A STATE TRAPPERS ASSOCIATION? _____

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE NTA OR FTA? _____

IS A MEMBER OF YOUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY A MEMBER OF NTA OR FTA _____

NAME OF MEMBER _____ RELATIONSHIP _____

IV. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING ON SEPARATE PAGES;

1. DESCRIBE 3 THINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGED IN THE WAY THE STATE OF MICHIGAN
MANAGES WILDLIFE.

2. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT MORE RESTRICTIVE GUN CONTROL REGULATIONS?

3. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO EDUCATE THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON THE BENEFITS OF WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT?

4. DESCRIBE YOUR SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM GOALS AND EXPLAIN WHY YOU HAVE MADE THESE
DECISIONS.

ATTACH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPTS, WORK HISTORY AND ANY OTHER INFORMATION YOU WISH.

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND ATTACHMENTS TO:

Mark Spencer, N4552 Spencer Lane, Moran, MI 49760

ANNUAL DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: JULY 1 ST , 2025

MTPCA Contact Info

Governing Board

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Region 2 Vice President: Dale Thorne - Email dthorne@mtpca.com

Region 3 Vice President: Vacant

Treasurer: Shane Hammond - E-mail shammond@mtpca.com

Membership Secretary: Steve Campbell - Email scampbell@mtpca.com

Recording Secretary: Craig Schafer Email cschafer@mtpca.com

Convention Coordinators: Jocelyn Anderson & Jon Southworth - Email janderson@mtpca.com

Public Relations: Merle Jones - Email mjones@mtpca.com

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Predator Caller Outreach Director: Mitchell McEachern - Email mitchell@mtpca.com

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Director at Large: Ed Lundborg - Email elundborg@mtpca.com

Region 1 - Upper Peninsula DNR Zone 1

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Regional Director: Vacant

Regional Director: Vacant

Region 2 - DNR Zone 2

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Regional Director: Ernest Winters - E-mail ewinters@mtpca.com

Regional Director - Matthew Schalk - Email mschalk@mtpca.com

Regional Director - Brad Branda - Email bbranda@mtpca.com

Region 3 - DNR Zone 3

Regional Vice President: Vacant

Regional Director: Jack Longstreet - Email jlongstreet@mtpca.com

Regional Director: Vacant

Regional Director: Jim Tate - Email jtate@mtpca.com

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Hello, if you are interested in entering in an article to be a part of the next *Trapline* please do so by reaching out to me at scampbell@mtpca.com The more the better, I am currently going to work on getting more articles and would love the memberships input into what they want to see out of the *Trapline*. Be it tips and tricks, product reviews, stories of hunts and traplines of yesteryear, bait and lure recipes, or hidden gems of the trapping world. With an engaged membership both the *Trapline* and the MTPCA will be better off for it.

STEVE CAMPBELL

TRAPLINE EDITOR