

Hello Gail,

EXHIBIT 10

DATE 2.17.05  
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Thank you so much for taking on this issue and sponsoring HB 603. I strongly support requiring a trapper safety course before being able to obtain a license; it amazes me that such courses are required for gun and archery hunting but not for trapping. Some may argue that it's needed for guns and archery because of the risk to humans from stray bullets or arrows and that human safety isn't nearly as big a concern with traps. However, safety is not the only issue hunter education courses should address; other important issues include hunting ethics/humane treatment of animals, appropriate traps and trap locations, and how to handle entrapment of domestic pets.

I noticed the new section (8) makes it mandatory for the commission to provide for an instruction course by using the words "shall provide" but in section (7), it is completely discretionary whether the commission adopts rules implementing best mgt practices for trappers because of the words "may adopt rules." I don't know if this was the result of some compromise, but I would urge you to consider changing that section to require the adoption of best management practices rather than leaving it discretionary.

I wanted to pass on a couple of recent examples of why we need the changes you are proposing. Last November, I was taking a walk with a friend and our dogs along a Forest Service road in the Nine Mile area. Because we were on FS land, there was no requirement for a leash and they were not "at large" as they were w/in our vision or w/in voice range. Suddenly we heard the painful yelping of one of the dogs about 100' ahead of us. We ran to her aide to find her caught in a leg-hold trap only 15' off the edge of the road. Fortunately, we were able to free her w/out damage to her leg or foot but she was sore for days afterward. An education course would inform trappers about the proper placement of traps and would hopefully keep most if not all from placing traps so close to trails and roads.

The second incident occurred on City Open Space property, called the Tower Street property at the north end of Tower Street in the Target Range area. The City purchased 80 acres along the Clark Fork River as part of the open space program in 2001. The land has several trails leading to the river and is used frequently by people walking their dogs, birding, and fishing access. A City ordinance prohibits trapping on the property. Last week the Parks Dept. got a call from a neighbor concerned about several traps - a snare, a leg-hold and a body-hold type trap on the property. We called Fish, Wildlife and Parks about it but they said they didn't have jurisdiction to prohibit trapping on the property and that the City would need to follow up w/ the trapper to inform him that it wasn't allowed. FWP did end up contacting the trapper and the traps have since been removed and I have been trying to contact the trapper (w/ no luck thus far) to make sure it never happens again. It horrified me that someone would place traps in an area that is criss-crossed with walking trails often used by neighborhood children and people walking their pets. Again, trapper education on the appropriate locations for traps may have prevented this.

Thanks again for introducing this bill! Sincerely, Jackie Corday