

Our Public Lands Are No Place For Trapping

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By Dorothy Filson

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The enjoyment of public lands in Montana is one of the unique and rare qualities of our Treasure State. But, increasingly, people are afraid to take their dogs with them for fear they will become caught in a trap.

Trapping of wild animals on public lands reduces fragile populations of some species and threatens the safety of hikers, campers and their pets. Each year, trapping maims and kills endangered species and continued trapping practices could lead to the extinction of lynx, wolverine, fisher, marten and otter in Montana.

Initiative 177, if it becomes law, will prohibit trapping on Montana's public lands with exceptions for scientific purposes, to protect public health and safety and the protection of livestock. Trapping on private land will not be affected.

Trapping causes brutal suffering and poses a significant danger to people and their pets. If a dog is caught in a Conibear trap, it takes at least two strong people to release the trap, and time is of the essence. Those traps are designed to kill. Many hikers have watched in horror as their dog dies, unable to do anything to help.

I-177, www.montanatrapfree.org, would end this cruel and unsportsmanlike practice, help preserve Montana's wildlife, and keep our public lands safe.

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