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Wolf trapping season begins; protest held in Missoula



Members of Footloose Montana, from left, Anja Heister, Dave Taylor and Connie Poten, spent a frigid Saturday on Higgins Avenue in downtown Missoula protesting the opening day of wolf trapping season and trapping in general.

December 16, 2012 11:30 am • By [ROB CHANEY of the Missoulian](#)

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Montana's 2012 wolf hunt shifted to a new gear on Saturday as trapping became a legal way to take the predators.

However, state Fish, Wildlife and Parks officials don't expect a rush of activity over the weekend. Trappers could not place traps before Saturday, and may leave them unchecked for up to 48 hours. They must report any kills within 24 hours.

Experienced trapper Mike Day of Missoula said he didn't expect much success at all from the state's new trapping program. Between the unhelpful weather and the difficult rules, he doubted the wolves had much to fear.

"We're going to have a bunch of dingbats running around with great big traps not knowing what they're doing," Day said on Friday. "It's designed to fail."

FWP rules prohibit setting traps within 150 feet of a road or trail, as well as 1,000 feet from trailheads and campgrounds. Day said because wolves tend to travel on the same roads and trails humans do, they'll never encounter the traps.


Michigan Legislature OKs bill authorizing wolf hunts

 LANSING, Mich. — Michigan moved to the brink of establishing hunting seasons for the gray wolf early Friday, as the state Legislature gave fin... [Read more](#)

Montana's first-ever wolf trapping season opens Saturday

 GREAT FALLS, MONT. -- Montana's first wolf trapping season begins Saturday, and more than 2,400 people statewide have been certified to participate. [Read more](#)

Montana officials shut down wolf hunting, trapping near Yellowstone

 BILLINGS — Montana wildlife

"It's just like real estate – location, location," Day said. "If your location's wrong, you're not going to catch nothing."

About 10 members of Footloose Montana braved the December wind to stage a protest on the Higgins Avenue on Saturday. The group's director, Filip Panusz, said members in Helena, Great Falls and Bozeman planned similar demonstrations.

"Myself, I'm a strong supporter of fair-chase hunting and bow-hunting," Panusz said on Saturday. "But trapping is not fair chase. It's not a clean kill. The animal suffers, maybe for days. You don't know your target, so you could catch all kinds of other, non-target species. And you're using bait, which is an unfair advantage that's not allowed in any other kind of hunting."

Panusz said Footloose Montana members were widely divided on the issue of killing wolves, but were unified in opposition to using traps. In addition to injuring or killing pet dogs and hunting dogs, trapping hurts Montana's image and economy, he said. While U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency surveys report the Montana economy annually brings in \$310 million a year from hunters and \$376 million from wildlife watchers, Panusz said trapping produces barely 1 percent of that amount.

Montana's rifle season for wolves continues through Feb. 28. But big game hunters took only 93 wolves during the regular October-November season. The state set a quota of 220 wolves in its 2011 hunting season but recorded only 166 kills. This year, FWP opted to forego a quota but monitor kills to ensure the state did not get close to a low threshold of 150 wolves. Going below that figure could trigger resumption of federal Endangered Species Act controls in Montana. More than 600 wolves are estimated to live in Montana.

In Idaho, rifle hunters have killed 116 wolves while trappers have taken another seven, according to Idaho Fish and Game reports. During the 2011-12 season, Idaho reported 255 wolves shot and 124 trapped. The state has no upper quota for wolf kills. Its season runs through March 31, 2013, in most parts of the state except in remote areas west of Montana's Bitterroot Mountain Range, where hunters can remain active until June 30.

Wyoming, which added a wolf hunt this year after gaining state control of its wolf population in early 2012, has reported at least 58 kills. The state has a quota of 52 wolves in a "trophy zone" around Yellowstone and Teton national parks, and hunters there have reported taking 39 animals. The rest of the state has no quota. Hunters have reported killing 19 wolves in that "predatory zone." The Wyoming wolf season lasts through Dec. 31.

commissioners on Monday closed down the gray wolf season in some areas outside Yellowstone National Park after sev... [Read more](#)

Idaho hunters kill 96 wolves



COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho — Idaho officials say hunters have killed 96 wolves so far in the 2012-2013 hunting season.

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No wolves caught in 1st weekend of Montana trapping season



Montana wolf trappers came up empty on the first

weekend of the state's new wolf trapping season. [Read more](#)

Conservation group wants wolf buffer zone around Yellowstone Park



CHEYENNE, Wyo. — A conservation group is calling on state and federal officials to create no-shooting zones around Yellowstone and Grand Teton...

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DARBY — With wolf trapping season in progress,

Bitterroot National Forest officials are urging cross-country skiers around Lake Como to take e... [Read more](#)

1st wolf hunting season almost over in Wyoming



CASPER, Wyo. — He spends most of his fall outside in the mountains, so finding a wolf was not a matter of if, but when. [Read more](#)

Montana FWP seeks expanded wolf hunting, trapping



HELENA — State wildlife officials asked lawmakers

Thursday to make it easier to hunt and trap wolves in Montana, while a Bozeman legislator ba... [Read more](#)

Judge: Wolf hunting, trapping can continue near Yellowstone Park



BILLINGS — A Montana judge issued an injunction Friday allowing wolf trapping and hunting to continue outside Yellowstone National Park, as la... [Read more](#)

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