

# WILD FUR SCHOOLS

## REPORT ON 2024 EVENTS



*Figure 1. Participants at a Wild Fur School in Dubois, Wyoming, watch an instructor demonstrate the use of foothold traps.*

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## WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Fur School covers:

- Introduction to regulated trapping and its role in conservation
- Demonstrations of fur processing and pelt preparation
- Human dimensions of trapping and the public's perception
- Effective communication techniques to discuss trapping with the public
- Cultural and historical aspects of the fur trade
- Wildlife agency best practices and research
- Hands-on trapping demonstrations

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## WHAT'S THE CONTEXT?

**Regulated trapping and fur handling** are often misunderstood and underrepresented aspects of wildlife conservation. Wild Fur School was developed to engage wildlife professionals, educators, and communicators in learning the essential elements of the fur trade—both past and present.

**Wild Fur School** brings together experts from multiple agencies to deliver engaging, hands-on professional development sessions. These workshops are co-hosted by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, The Wildlife Society, USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and cooperating state fish and wildlife agencies. The goal: build agency capacity to communicate about the sustainable use of wildlife, especially the responsible use of fur.

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## 2024 PARTICIPATION SNAPSHOT

**Held in:**

- Lewiston, Idaho
- Dubois, Wyoming
- Stevens Point, Wisconsin
- Albany, New York

**Attendees included representatives from:**

- 20 State Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- 5 Federal Agencies
- 4 Universities
- 2 Tribal Organizations
- 7 NGOs and conservation groups



*Figure 2. After skinning and fleshing a beaver, a Wild Fur School participant tacks a beaver pelt on a board to dry. In the background, participants skin or prepare to skin other furbearers.*

**FEEDBACK & OUTCOMES**

Post-workshop evaluations show **overwhelmingly positive responses** from attendees.

## Overall Satisfaction

★★★★★

**100% of respondents** were “very satisfied” with the workshop.

## Learning Outcomes

Respondents reported significantly increased knowledge in:

- **Effective communication** about trapping and fur
- **Furbearer processing and pelt preparation**
- **Relationship of regulated fur use to conservation**
- **Cultural importance and historical perspectives**
- **Understanding BMPs and regulated use**

## Most Valued Topics

- Proper fur handling and skinning techniques
- BMPs for ethical furbearer management
- Public communication strategies
- Historic and cultural context of the fur trade

## Workshop Impact

Participants left with improved skills in:

- Communicating the conservation value of regulated fur use
- Teaching proper techniques for fur processing
- Addressing public misconceptions about trapping and fur

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*Partnering to fund conservation  
and connect people with nature.*



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