

TRAPPER EDUCATION NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2008 EDITION

February – my favorite time of year. I have budgets and business plans to prepare. Does it get better than this? Not!

We are almost through most of our courses this season. I projected numbers for the last two and here is where we stand:

12 courses

194 students

20% female

29% under 18 years of age.

There has been some interest in our summer courses at the college. See the website for more information .We might try and run a summer course at Lloydminster to test- off season instruction.

School Program: Since the pilot project in 2005 up to Oct. 2007 we made 246 presentations to 7147 students. Next year we are stepping back and rethinking the programs. We cannot meet the demands with our present format. I am looking at developing kits we can send to a school with skulls, sample furs, a video and a DVD. The DVD is yet to be developed. The kits alone will run about \$20,000 for 20 kits and some spare parts. The DVD will probably run about the same. This is the next phase for the program. It will never be as good as an actual presentation but should lay the groundwork should a school wish to speak to a trapper after the presentation. I will be looking at funding and partners in the near future.

Pine Marten Nest boxes: We have some results now. Darrell Walde, Slave Lake, sent in some samples found in the boxes to Lake Head University for testing. At first it appeared that squirrels might be using the boxes. It turns out that in 4 of the 5 samples submitted there was marten hair in the box. To what purpose the marten used the box, we don't know but it is promising to note that they will use the box. We need more data now before more recommendations can be made. By the way, I was speaking with Shell oil and it would appear that the marten box project might be eligible for a grant should you be interested. Check out the grant process on their website www.shell.ca. No guarantees of course but something to consider.

SAFETY

You have probably read about Ken Hildebrandt. Ken was trapped under his quad for 3 nights and is lucky to be alive. He was on the national news. Hopefully he will come out of this mess OK. There is a new device on the market that should be of interest to any outdoorsman. It is called SPOT gps. I tried it out and it works. I will do an article for our magazine but here is the readers digest report:

SPOT clips onto your belt. You press a button and it sends a signal to someone e mail or text message to a phone. The preset message says "I'm OK" or "send help". With the message is your GPS position and with e mail there is a link to Google maps with your location. In addition you can also get 911. The cost is about \$169 for the unit and about \$100 for a yearly subscription. You can even get 911 insurance for \$8 a year in the event of a false signal sent or you have to pay for a rescue. Dealers can be found on the website. The website is www.findmyspot.com.

I attached a couple of diary pages. Again, let me know if you want this stuff or is it useless information.

I attached NAFA's wild fur auction report for January 2008. I did this in the event you were to full of joy and needed some toning down. I don't care what anyone says; \$20 beaver just don't cut it, period! Not when gas alone each trip is \$100. Let us hope the price comes up somewhat to make this business profitable. The sad part, especially with beaver, is that they will be removed either by disease, starvation or as problem animals and that is wasteful. It is truly one of nature's marvels and the value should be reflected in fur prices, otherwise it becomes just a nuisance pest to be controlled. Enough pontificating I will try and be more up beat.

Heading for the line this week to close up. I was supposed to be there today but fell ill and having the trots in a skidoo suit is not something to look forward to. I have to get some teeth pulled on Wednesday and will go up then. I can be in misery just as easily at the cabin than by staying home. I don't get a lot of sympathy anyways.

All in all it appears to be a good fur season but it is mostly coming to a close. Under ice beaver is an option but it is easier to take them in the spring and there is not much difference in price. I will spend some time cutting logs for the spring as I have some repairs to make on wet sections of my main trail in. I am tired of winching my way through and it is time to make a bridge. Until next month.

Jim

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Trapper Education

- again if you want off, send an e mail info@albertatrappers.com