

Activities & Career Plans

In high school I participated in volleyball for a year, the school council where I helped with school dances and other activities. I also enjoyed 4H, where I was a member for 9 years where I participated in the riding, fed steer, heifer and cow/calf projects. I also enjoyed going to my dad's trap line with him in the winter where he'd show me various tracks. On occasion I would watch as he skinned a carcass he trapped.

In my future I hope to work at a large and a small animal vet clinic as I love all creatures big and small somewhere in Alberta. Perhaps one day I would like to open a boarding kennel for dogs and cats as when I had a job at one I thoroughly loved it. That is a ways down the road though since I have wanted to work in a vet clinic since I was a small child.

Furbearer Management

Life works in a cycle; it has for millions upon millions of years. The elk eats the grass, and the wolves eat the elk, the wolf dies, maggots and other decomposers slowly eat away at the wolf corpse turning it into nutrients for the grass which the elk eats. But like life itself, this cycle has many complications. Sometimes before the wolf can get to the elk something potentially disrupts the cycle, such as disease or starvation due to a shortage in wolves or an abundance of elk. This is where the most intellect mammal, humans, can help Mother Nature out. Controlling populations of various animals can not only protect them and other species, but humans as well. Managing furbearers is also a part of Canada's past and is a way of life for many. Furbearer management is a reliable and constructive form in many different aspects.

When a species is allowed to become overpopulated we see problems arise, such as food shortages which are a cause and effect relationship that can damage the ecosystem and food chain. For example, if a carnivore's population is low or becomes extinct, herbivores will overpopulate and compete amongst each other for the same plants and could potentially wipe out the whole plant species. This could cause starvation and force many to leave the area in search of food. Trapping and hunting prevents an unbalanced food chain because by keeping the herbivore population from overproducing we can be sure the plant species will not be wiped out and make sure that other problems do not take place. Another problem that can come up from overpopulation is diseases, such as distemper, and parasitism, such as mange. These diseases and parasites can eventually spread to people and their pets, becoming a major problem for everyone. Diseases may also shift to other populations and could upset the natural balance and potentially wipe out an already endangered species. By monitoring populations through trapping, we are able to prevent complications throughout a community caused by overpopulation.

Without the furbearer management, we will see problems not only in our ecosystem but also in our own backyards. As mentioned earlier, diseases and parasites can spread to not only wildlife, but to people and our household pets. Rabies is a well-known example that can easily make its way into our households, as we all have seen in the classic, "Old Yeller." Trapping also helps keep furbearers out of our backyards. Raccoons are known to enjoy some garbage digging and are not friendly pets to have around. Also coyotes and wolves are known to prey on household pets such as cats and also on livestock. Beavers can also become major pests if their population is not managed. They can damage a whole environment by damaging trees and causing dams that can flood crops or homes or anything nearby. Furbearer management, when monitored, can help keep not only a healthy balance for the ecosystem but can make it safer and healthier in our own backyards as well.

Trapping helps keep balance but also is a reminder about our history and is still useful and functional to us today. Looking back at our ancestors, we can see how much they relied on furbearers for survival. Native Americans used them for food, medicine, warmth, and clothing and for religion. They also used the furs to trade for other vital necessities and the fur trade in

Canada became a major part of our history. Today we do not rely on furbearers as much as we once did, but it is important to keep that part of our heritage alive so future generations do not forget about it. It helped shaped our country to what it is today. We still use pelts for clothing, and in some areas of the world where it is frigid, using the pelts is the only clothing that provides enough warmth. Trapping today also teaches younger generations the importance of survival and subsistence skills and gives them a sense of responsibility. It also gives humanity a strong appreciation for wildlife and the environment. Trapping furthermore gives us a sense of self-reliance and independence because we are able to feed and support our families without big name supermarkets supplying everything. It can also help us save money by creating sustenance in our households and allows us to earn some money through the fur trade that still goes on today. Trapping definitely helps manage the food chain and ecosystem but it is also a way of life that has been carried on by many generations for thousands of years.

Mother Nature has her way of keeping a balanced ecosystem, but in today's world and for our own use, it is not very practical nor is it reliable. Diseases and starvation may rear up when unmanaged due to overpopulated species that affect and can harm the entire food chain and ecosystem. It can also cause harm in our own backyards if we are not careful. Trapping is more than a recreational sport. It is a part of our past and has shaped our country and is a way of life for many people. Managing furbearers teaches our youth about the wildlife, survival skills and gives them responsibility. Without furbearer management there would be many complications. Furbearer management helps keep a sustainable, balanced ecosystem for all species and gives us all a better understanding of the environment and the wildlife that lives there.