



September 29, 2022

City Commission
City of Bozeman
121 N. Rouse Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59715

Dear Mayor Andrus, Deputy Mayor Cunningham, and City Commissioners:

We, the undersigned as citizens of Bozeman, urge the mayor and city commissioners to consider banning trapping on the city-owned land at the Sourdough Creek trail. As you know, this is a popular trail where the citizenry of Bozeman spend much of their time recreating with family, friends, and pets. This high-use area is open to trapping which become landmines hidden from view that are a disaster waiting to happen. Ground set traps only need to be 50 feet off the trail and there are no setbacks for water set traps. The public safety issues this raises are clear: small children who wander can easily get their foot caught in a trap as well as the hundreds of off-leash dogs that run freely up there. There have been multiple family pets who have had their beloved dog caught in a foothold trap or snare across the Gallatin Valley. The lucky ones survive with brutal soft tissue or bone injuries. Some require amputation. Others not so fortunate do not survive the trauma endured.

The Sourdough Creek drainage is vital habitat in a key wildlife migration corridor that extends from YNP to the Gallatin range to the Bridgers and beyond. Trapping is indiscriminate and non-target animals are often victims. With the exception of wolf traps, there are no trap set check times that require a trapper to check his traps. Animals routinely suffer for days and are forced to endure an agonizing death from either hypothermia, hunger/thirst, blood loss, or psychological trauma.

You have a unique opportunity here to achieve a victory in the community. All the regulations that guide trapping, as written in the policies administered by Fish Wildlife & Parks, favor trapping as a “recreational pursuit” in the context of their entitled cultural heritage. Please consider breaking from this historic tradition of 18th century barbarism. The cruelty and suffering of trapped animals is significant and the public should not be forced to recreate in fear.

Less than 1% of Montanans are trappers. And yet they hold us hostage on our own public lands. Based on a recent meeting with the Custer-Gallatin Forest Service management, they have indicated that the Forest Service will follow suit to ban trapping on their lands just adjacent to yours. We are just hoping the City of Bozeman will take the lead and set the example of how a modern mountain town conducts itself.

Grateful for your consideration,

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