

Appendix A

Potential Discussion Points for Scenarios



Note: The answers below are meant to serve as a starting point for discussion within the classroom. They were developed so that students reading the manual outside of the classroom would have some potential responses to consider.

Chapter 2 Historical Considerations

Scenario 1: The farmer stated that he was experiencing raccoon damage. However, you would need more information from him in order to conclude what attitude or value he placed on wildlife. The farmer may believe in animal rights or he may hold a preservation attitude. Chances are, though, that the farmer would like to minimize his economic losses. He may welcome the opportunity to allow a trapper onto his property. This may be an opportunity for you to ask permission to trap on his property.

Scenario 2: It appears that the new family has different attitudes and values towards wildlife than you do. The family may believe in animal rights. It is likely that you would not be able to change the young man's opinion. However, you could introduce yourself, welcome the family to the neighborhood, and explain your history with his property. If he objects to you trapping on his property, you should remain polite and accept his decision. Depending on the situation, you might be able to answer any questions that he has about trapping. Perhaps the young man had never been exposed to trapping in the past. This might be an opportunity for you to explain what types of traps you use, what types of sets that you make (you don't have to get too specific), and how often you check your traps. If the young man becomes irate immediately after you mention trapping, you should remain cordial. You could potentially diffuse the situation by apologizing for making him upset and telling him that everyone holds different values. You could also say that you will respect his decision not to allow you to trap on his property. At that point you could welcome him again to the neighborhood and then leave his property.

Scenario 3: This is quite an unfortunate situation. Obviously, the woman is in distress and this may or may not be the best time to talk with her about trapping. It really depends on the situation. If given the opportunity, you might be able to talk to her about what happened. You might be able to get a feel for what she thinks about coyotes and if you might be allowed to trap on her land (if she is a landowner). However, like in Scenario 1, you really can't tell what her attitude is towards wildlife. She may blame herself for allowing the coyote the opportunity to attack her pet. The woman may hold an animal rights attitude. Even if you don't have the opportunity to talk to the woman, you could inform the veterinarian that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources has guidelines for living with coyotes. Perhaps the veterinarian could share this information with other clients and perhaps even post them on their bulletin board. Even if you were going to trap coyotes on someone's property, you would not be able to remove all of the coyotes. In addition, the coyotes that you do remove would create an opening for new coyotes to move into the area. Therefore, people should follow the guidelines to avoid potential problems with coyotes. The guidelines are available online at www.michigan.gov/dnr.

Scenario 4: The people sitting next to you may hold the following attitudes: subsistence, utilitarian or extermination. It sounds like they were poachers. It is probably unwise to confront these people in the restaurant or elsewhere. You should call the toll-free Report All Poaching number at 800-292-7800 to report the situation and allow proper law enforcement authorities to investigate the situation. Provide as many details as you can—license plate number, description of three men, what you overheard, and details of what you observed. By reporting your observations, you would be demonstrating responsible behavior concerning wildlife.

Trapper Education Manual



Chapter 3 Responsible Trapping

Scenario 1: Your cousin's statements appear to contradict what is on the signs. The property owner must care about trespassers or else he wouldn't have taken the time to post the signs. In addition, just because you might get away with doing something, doesn't mean that you should do it. Remember that your actions reflect on all trappers. Think about whether or not you would like other trappers to possibly create a poor image of you if they did something similar. By trespassing you would not be demonstrating responsible behavior and could be potentially violating the law. You should convince your cousin to ask the property owner for permission to trap on his land before he sets any traps. If the landowner denies access, then it is time to look for a new area.

Scenario 2: When you set traps, you are obligated to check them on a regular basis. However, the length of time between trap checks really depends on the type of sets that you made. It is recommended that traps where the animal is held alive be checked daily. In certain areas of Michigan, live-restraining traps must be checked daily. *Check the Michigan Hunting and Trapping Guide for current regulations.* You do not have to check kill-type sets daily. Therefore, if you set three dozen kill-type sets, you could spend the night and attend the party. However, if you set live-restraining traps (e.g., foothold traps not in submersion sets), you need to check your traps. If this is the case, you might be able to check your traps in the morning and then perhaps attend the party later that day. You may want to ask some of your friends to go along with you as you check your traps. This would be a good opportunity to introduce someone to responsible trapping. It may also allow you to answer questions and dispel any myths about trapping, and who knows, your friends may like to start trapping themselves. There are ways that you can minimize the time you spend on the trapline. Resetting traps takes more time, so you might consider just checking the traps and harvesting any animals that are in your traps. You could reset the traps the next day. You could skin your animals later that night or freeze them to skin later.

Scenario 3: There may be a wide range of emotions that the fox trapper is exhibiting. His demeanor will most likely influence how you proceed. If the trapper appears confrontational, you should simply tell him that you will talk with Mr. Smith as soon as possible to make sure that you understand the property boundaries. If the fox trapper appears reasonable and has knowledge about the surrounding area, he may be able to provide some assistance on where Mr. Smith's property lines are located. If he does not know, you should mention the possibility that perhaps the Jones family sold to the property to Mr. Smith. In either case, finish checking your traps and contact Mr. Smith. If you find that you made an error, go back and pull your traps. If the fox trapper was in error, let Mr. Smith decide how he wants to handle the situation. Once the property dispute is resolved, you can trap with a clear conscience. If Mr. Smith now owns the property, perhaps he will allow the fox trapper access as well.

Scenario 4: You should explain to the hunters that you have foothold traps in the area. The hunters may choose to go in a different direction. You should tell them that the devices will not hurt their dogs, should they get caught, and that you will help remove the traps. This may be a good time to promote trapping by explaining the positive benefits, if the hunters are interested in talking for a while. There may be the chance that the hunters oppose any type of traps that may capture their dogs. If so, you may want to state, in a non-confrontational manner, the importance of user groups sharing the resources. Then you could explain to them that the traps are just meant to be holding devices and that they can be easily removed. Remember that your attitude and behavior will affect the hunters in a positive or negative way.

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Scenario 5: You should explain to them that you have not stolen any fur and that you have not even seen any other traps on the property. The fur thief might even be a trespasser. You could express your regret and tell them that you could let them know if you see any suspicious behavior. Perhaps they could do the same for you. Perhaps you could also make a contact with the local Conservation Officer to make him/her aware of the potential trespasser/fur thief situation.

Scenario 6: This is a great opportunity for you to explain the benefits of trapping. You will also want to explain that trapping is a highly regulated activity that is managed by resource professionals within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Natural Resources Commission. Be prepared to answer questions regarding the types of traps that you use and the sets that you make. Let your friend know that you are an ethical trapper and harvest animals in the most humane way possible. Perhaps your friend was never exposed to hunting or trapping in the past and is unaware of current trap types and specific regulations for trapping.

Scenario 7: You should find out if the farmer has the necessary permit. You should also find out what the regulations are. The farmer should understand that you want to make sure that you are following all of the regulations. This will show him that you are an ethical, responsible person. The farmer should be pleased to have someone like you trapping his property. If he doesn't have a permit and wants you to help anyway, you should try to convince him to obtain a permit before he shoots any deer. You could tell him that you heard that other farmers in the area had obtained the free permits. Chances are that he would be able to easily obtain a permit as well. If he still wants to poach, you should decline. You should be call the Report All Poaching toll-free number at 1-800-292-7800 and report this incident (you can remain anonymous). You may want to consider finding new areas to trap.

Scenario 8: You should not steal the fox! It is illegal! There will be other opportunities for you to catch a fox. You need to be responsible and do the right thing. How would you feel if the other trapper stole a fox out of *your* trap? The next fox just might end up in your trap.