

# **Edit: We all have a right to enjoy Idaho's public lands**

**Devin Rokyta/Moscow-Pullman Daily News Editorial Board**

Trapping animals for “hunting” purposes is simply a disgusting, barbaric and cruel practice.

There's no other way to put it.

As revolting as the practice is when it actually achieves its intended goal, it's even more vile when domestic pets are added to the equation. In 2013 alone, more than 30 dogs — and 24 house cats — were caught in traps set for hunting in Idaho, according to Idaho Fish and Game data. While most of the dogs survived, some weren't so lucky.

Back in December and January, two dogs were caught in conibear traps, which are designed to snap on an animal's neck, closing the trachea and the blood vessels to the brain. It often fractures the spinal column and the animal loses consciousness within a few minutes and dies soon after. The owners of the dogs, unable to free their beloved family members, could do little more than watch as their dogs suffered and died.

The first death occurred the day after Christmas near Kellog, where a 2-year-old mix was killed in less than a minute along a trail in a popular recreation area. The second was in January when a woman took her 4-year-old black Labrador on a run near her home near Coeur d'Alene. The trap closed so tight the woman and her husband had to call for help to free the dog's lifeless body.

We here on the board would love to see an outright ban on the practice, but, alas, we live in Idaho, where trapping is guaranteed in the state constitution, thanks to a hunting rights amendment approved in 2012.

While we expected little response from state officials, we were pleasantly surprised to learn Idaho's Fish and Game Commission has agreed to look at new rules to restrict conibear traps.

As we've said before, whether hunters like it or not, they share the Northwest's forests with domesticated animals and other humans, who shouldn't have to fear deadly traps on public lands. A hunter's privilege to hunt shouldn't trump the rights of others to safely enjoy the Northwest's wild. We're hopeful Fish and Game really shares that opinion.