

September 15, 2015

Newfoundland and Labrador Trappers Association

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Dear NL Political Party Leader,

In this election year, we wish to gauge your receptiveness to some outstanding concerns we have, and advise our members of same by posting your responses on our website at [www.nltrappers.com](http://www.nltrappers.com).

We would appreciate, in a timely manner, your frank positions on the following that remain unresolved after several years. The more prominent of these are as follow:

#### Trapper Cabin Policy (Crown Lands)

We have been attempting for several years to modernize the antiquated and punitive policy that Lands has implemented. Our trappers pay a similar annual fee as do remote recreational cottagers, yet we are restricted to one building not more than 10 x 10 feet in area. There is no restriction on building size for recreational leases. A trapline may require two, or sometimes three cabins. Other Canadian jurisdictions allow for this, and in most cases there is no fee whatsoever. NL charges the \$113 fee for each small structure. Trapping can be a marginal income at times, and this kind of fee structure is a significant disadvantage for trappers. We want nothing more than the norm as practiced by other provinces/territories and would like your position on this.

#### NF Marten Recovery

Since the arrival of Red-backed Vole, the threatened NF marten has exploded in response to availability of its primary prey species throughout this continent. Marten are now being accidentally harvested by trappers well outside core range and this range expansion is nothing short of phenomenal. A mirror image of this resurgence can be seen in Northern Cod. In that case, a sentinel fishery was initiated to document the species recovery. We expect that a similar sentinel fishery of sorts be initiated to document our marten recovery. This would involve allowing trappers to retain and market accidental marten subject to stringent guidelines. This would facilitate an accurate scientific assessment of marten recovery as opposed to the vacuous anecdotal data and purportedly underground marten harvest that may currently exist.

#### Problem Beaver Removal

On insular Newfoundland beavers are managed on an individual registered trapline basis. A trapper has exclusive beaver trapping rights for a specific geographic area, usually of approximately 60 square kilometres. Beaver pelt prices are presently at an all-time low, and most trappers tend to reduce or curtail their effort at such times. However, there appears to be a common expectation by Conservation Officers that we respond immediately to problems of beavers causing flooding/property damage or inhabiting water supply areas. This expectation is that we harvest beaver either before, or at the start of the season, when their pelts are of even lesser value than in winter. Some trappers report of having been threatened with loss of their trapline should they not respond. At present pelt prices, it is at best marginal to economically trap beaver even when prime. Trapping at other times results in a trapper doing a valuable, and quite necessary, public service at an out of pocket expense, which can be significant. This amounts to slave labour. Ontario and many other Canadian provinces offer financial incentive for trappers to perform this service. This varies by jurisdiction but averages around \$75 per each problem beaver removed or relocated. We would like to see such a fair compensation policy be established in this province and would appreciate your position on this.

#### Saturation Trapping

In recent years this has occurred in the heavily human populated Upper Lake Melville and Labrador West areas of Labrador, and mostly involved marten, which have been quite valuable. With the high marten prices, the number of trapping licences sold grew exponentially, mostly among "recreational" trappers. This negatively impacted the harvests of seasoned trappers in these areas, who saw diminishing harvest levels as a result. In the interest of professional trappers and also for conservation sake, we would like to see licence quota caps in these areas, similar to caps already in place for management of big game.

There are a number of additional outstanding resolutions that we wish to move forward, however we will gauge your receptivity to our concerns via these presented and advise our membership accordingly via our website and our nationally-circulated magazine [Canadian Trapper](#).

Thank you,

NLTA Senior Executive