

## Rep. Quinn: Mentored Trapping Testimony

The push for this mentored trapping bill, AB 448, began in January 2013 by “Junior” Prudlick, who began working with the Wisconsin Trappers Association, DNR staff, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, and the Wisconsin Conservation Congress to advance this initiative.

The 2014 Wisconsin Conservation Congress Spring Hearing Questionnaire took Mr. Prudlick’s idea to the public, where it received strong support.<sup>1</sup> You will be hearing more from Mr. Prudlick regarding the importance of the creation of this program, and of the importance of exposing more people of all ages to our trapping and outdoors traditions.

This bill is simple, and it is very similar to our current hunting mentor program. It allows a person, most likely a young person, to tag along with a qualified trapper, in order to trap animals other than a bobcat, otter, fisher, or wolf. The mentor must be with the person participating at all times, and the mentor may take more than one person if he or she feels they can adequately and safely supervise them. Under this bill, a father will now easily be able to take his daughter out trapping for the first time. A community leader will be able to bring a group of Boy Scouts out into the woods to learn a part of our state’s heritage. It allows a student returning from college or a young adult new to our area to go out with an experienced mentor and experience our traditions firsthand.

Current law prohibits a person from taking or appropriating a trap, or the contents of the trap, belonging to another person. This bill creates an exemption for those participating in this program, as long as the mentor has approved, and the mentor is not trapping bobcat, otter, fisher, or wolf. This makes the mentoring process easy and approachable – the mentee can get involved hands-on, under the guidance of a knowledgeable and experienced mentor.

Broad-based community support has been built and makes clear that this program will be a real benefit for our state. As the Baby Boomer generation ages, Wisconsin is seeing a steep decline in the number of outdoorsmen taking advantage of our great sporting heritage. Encouraging greater youth participation in outdoor opportunities is important to reversing that decline. By bringing more youth into the trapping program, Wisconsin will continue to expand our proud outdoor heritage.

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<sup>1</sup> Question 43: Passed in 70 counties – Vote totals: 3960 (yes)/1348 (no)

Having explained what is in the bill, I note that after a request by the Trappers, I am considering removing the licensure requirements for mentees. This would allow for a hunter to take advantage of a nice fall weekend by bringing a mentee out without having to wait weeks for tags to be delivered.



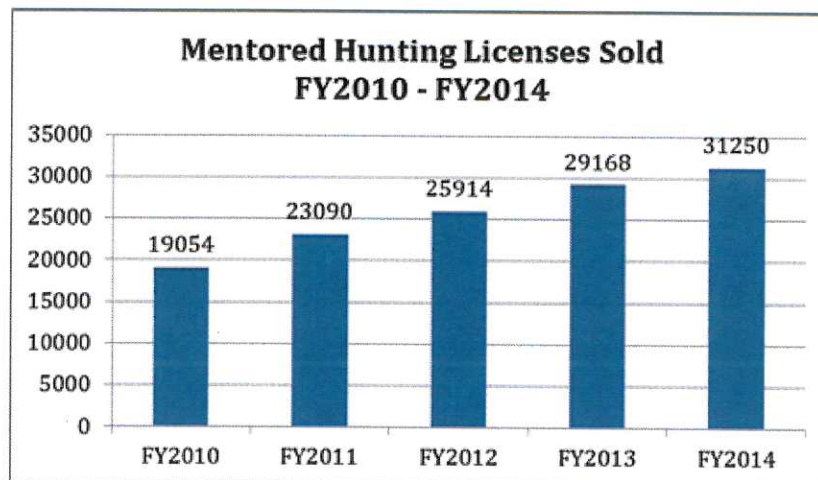
## Assembly Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage AB 448 – Mentored trapping October 28, 2015

Chair Ott and committee members:

AB 448 establishes an exception to our trapper education program requirement for people who will be trapping with a mentor – very similar to the mentored hunting program that many of us are familiar with.

Mentored hunting is a one-on-one opportunity giving first-time hunters a chance to try hunting in a safe situation and enables veteran hunters to pass on their knowledge and passion for the outdoors.

Based on participation, mentored hunting has been successful and it seems like you could expect the same from mentored trapping, although at a smaller scale simply because there are fewer trappers overall.



Something that's not related to mentored trapping is a provision that allows a trapper to check another trapper's sets if they have permission of the person who placed the trap. The person checking or operating the trap still needs to have their tag on it, so this is pretty consistent with how the law is being interpreted now – the traps can be “double tagged” and two people can, for instance, share the work of checking traps in the morning.

In a mentored situation, the trap could have a tag of either the mentor or the person being mentored.

How this would likely be implemented is that a person who purchases a trapping license but who has not completed trapper education would simply be issued a license that says “mentored” on.

We would have to do a little bit of license system programming related to the trapper education requirement that is currently built in, but the delayed effective date should take care of that.

Thank you for having me here to testify, I would be happy to answer questions you may have.



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## **Testimony of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Regarding AB 448**

Chairman Ott, Members of the Assembly Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage Committee. My name is Gary Dieck and I am the Second Vice-President of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. The Federation is comprised of over 190 hunting, fishing, trapping and forestry related organizations located throughout the State of Wisconsin.

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The Wildlife Federation has worked with and is strongly supportive of the efforts of the Wisconsin Trappers Association in the development of Assembly Bill 448, the Trapping Mentorship Bill. The WTA has a long and strong history of introducing youth to trapping in Wisconsin and forms the backbone of trapper education in the state.

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Assembly Bill 448 provides the opportunity for younger youth to become more involved in the actual hands-on practices of trapping under the watchful eye of an experienced trapping mentor. This valuable experience will lead to the earlier development of trapping skills and the foundation for a lifetime of trapping opportunity. Trapping plays a major role in the management of furbearer wildlife in this state and this bill insures that Wisconsin will maintain a strong force of skilled trappers into the future.

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The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation strongly supports AB 448 with the change recommended by the Wisconsin Trappers Association and thanks the bill authors, Representative Quinn and Senator Moulton for their work on the bill. Please pass this bill in the very near future.

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