

# FUR ADVISORY COUNCIL 2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT



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## INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Louisiana has a strong trapping heritage. From the early 1900s through the 1980s, Louisiana led the continent in the production of wild fur pelts.

During the early 1900s the Louisiana fur market supported over 20,000 trappers and 1,000 fur buyers and dealers. Muskrat populations expanded, and trappers harvested over 9 million pelts worth \$12 million in 1945. Louisiana produced almost 65 percent of North American fur during this period.

A much larger non-native rodent, the nutria, was farmed in the state in the late 1930s and escaped and/or was released into the near perfect habitat of coastal Louisiana. Nutria multiplied quickly and by 1962 surpassed the muskrat in numbers harvested. Between 1962 and 1982 average harvest by trappers topped 1.3 million nutria annually, representing over 60 percent of the total fur industry. Today, nutria harvest is an essential part of habitat management due to the nutria's aggressive eating habits.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) manages the state's 12 different species of furbearers (beaver, bobcat, coyote, gray fox, mink, muskrat, nutria, opossum, skunk, raccoon, red fox, river otter). During the past 10 years, the state has averaged producing 19,166 pelts annually. The average annual production of nutria during the past 10 years has been 6,911 and raccoon has been 6,348. These two species alone provided approximately 69% of the value of an industry worth over \$1 million annually to Louisiana trappers, including the \$5 per tail Coastwide Nutria Control Program (CNCP) payments to participating trappers.

Although fur harvest has continued to decrease due to a poor market, youth trapping has increased for the past three seasons, thus keeping this Louisiana heritage alive.

# WASHINGTON D.C. EDUCATION

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) contracted with Glenn Delaney to stay abreast of any Legislative movement that might be of interest to LDWF, the Fur Advisory Council, or the Alligator Advisory Council.

Mr. Delaney met with key members of Congress and their staff to educate them on issues important to Louisiana’s sustainable use wildlife programs. He carefully monitored the legislative efforts of animal rights groups and their advocates on Capitol Hill so that any anti-trapping or anti-sustainable use bills could be addressed in a timely manner.

Mr. Delaney sought funding for research on infectious diseases affecting Louisiana’s alligator population. Although funding for this research was not appropriated, the Senate Appropriations Committee Report stressed the need for the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to focus on this critical issue.

Mr. Delaney worked closely with LDWF administration and program managers to address pertinent legislative issues. The funding for the contract was split equally between the Fur Advisory Council and the Alligator Advisory Council’s budgets.



## 2018-2019 EXPENDITURES

The Fur Advisory Council operates within the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and uses the Louisiana Fur Public Education and Marketing Fund.

LOUISIANA FUR PUBLIC EDUCATION AND MARKETING FUND	
Budgeted	\$100,000.00
Salaries	\$17,241.95
Related Benefits	\$7,484.18
Operating Services	\$1,237.91
Supplies	\$20,143.54
Professional Services– DC education contract	\$18,375.00
Inter-Agency Transfer	\$2,694.09
<b>Education and Marketing Funds Expended</b>	<b>\$67,176.67</b>



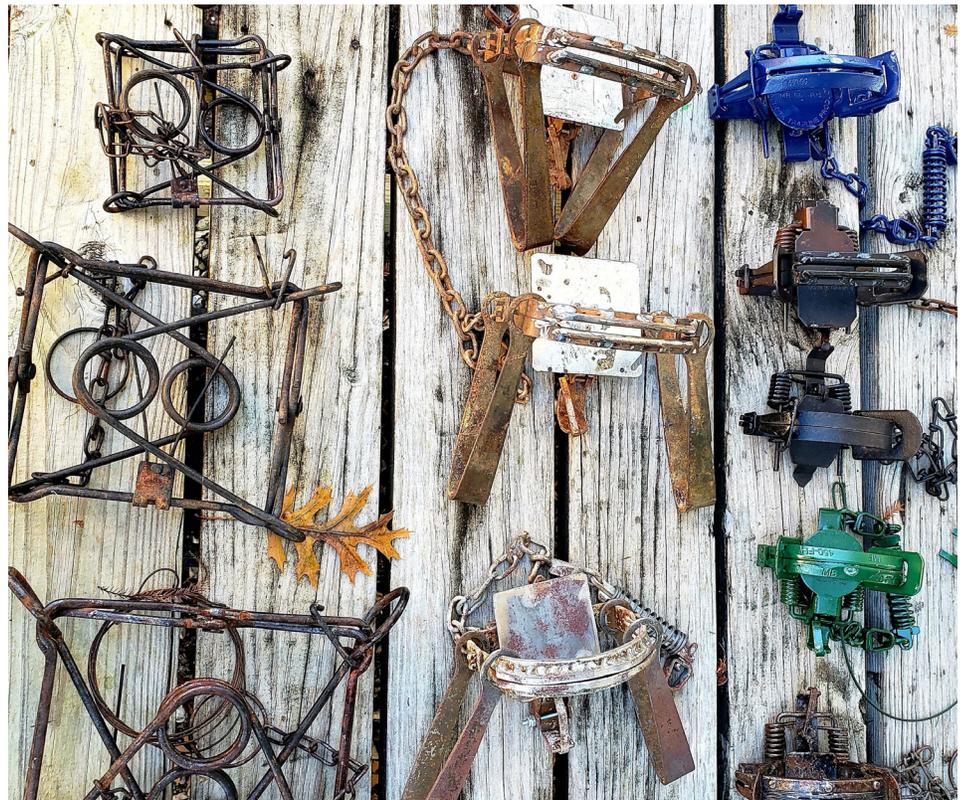
# EDUCATION PROGRAM

The first goal specified in the legislation that created the Fur Advisory Council identifies the need for education, and the council and LDWF focuses primarily on this directive. The council has taken a two-tiered approach to education focusing on both outreach education and trapper education.

The council participated in over a dozen outreach events such as National Hunting and Fishing Day, Archery in Louisiana Schools' tournaments, and Step Outside day during this fiscal year. They also participated at Ocean Commotion, an event targeting teachers and elementary and middle school children. The council provided biological facts and educational support to other LDWF staff who presented at schools and at other outreach events including the Gonzales Sportsman Show. The council also partnered with other educational and outreach organizations such as the Audubon Zoo and Wetland Watchers to reach a broader audience.

LDWF and the Louisiana Trappers and Alligator Hunter's Association hosted a trapper instructor workshop followed by eight trapping workshops around the state. These workshops attracted a wide range of students, including teenagers, biology students, working adults, and retired adults. LDWF also ran two three-day trapping schools, where students set and ran their own trap-line and skinned their own harvest under the supervision of an instructor. Due in part to this program, youth trapping license sales have increased the past three years.

LDWF continued the partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) for the Louisiana Level 1 Online Trappers' Course. The online course covers Louisiana trapping regulations, ethics, safety, and habitat management as well as practical trapping skills. Although all trapper education is voluntary in Louisiana, trapping students are encouraged to take the online course as a prerequisite to the hands-on workshops and the trapping school.





# FUR QUEEN PROMOTION

The Fur Advisory Council and LDWF sponsors the Louisiana Fur and Wildlife Festival by providing a fur garment to the Louisiana Fur and Wildlife Festival Fur Queen and fur accessories to the Fur Queen and Ms. Cameron. The winning queens promote the fur industry and speak about trapping as a management tool throughout the year as they participate in festivals and pageants across the state.

The queens wear real fur at these events and explain how supporting the fur industry invests in Louisiana's beautiful, rich habitat. Miss Hali Westerman was crowned Fur Queen this year, and she proudly wears her fur coat at events across the state. She promotes the use of real fur over faux fur, shows examples of the different furbearers found in Louisiana and how the fur can be utilized, and talks about ecology and habitat management as it relates to trapping. Miss Alivia Mudd was crowned Miss Cameron and carries a fur purse as a talking point about the ethical and sustainable wild fur market. Miss Cesilee Oliver was crowned Miss Teen Fur and proudly talked about the Louisiana fur industry at events she attended. Ms. Oliver even did some school presentations showing Louisiana furs.

The queens attended over a dozen festivals and balls throughout the state, participated in parades, and used their platforms to promote cultural pride in Louisiana and its natural resources.



**LEFT:** Hali Westerman, Fur Queen, and Cesilee Oliver, Teen Ms. Fur, in fur trimmed pageant banners.

**RIGHT:** Alivia Mudd, Ms. Cameron, helping at a skinning contest at the Louisiana Fur and Wildlife Festival.

# LOUISIANA FUR ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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