

Who Made This Mess?
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Well, the season is over and the only thing left to do is straighten up the shed and wait until next November. Right? Wrong! Now is the time to roll up the sleeves and get to work!

First, I take my packbasket buckets or bags and clean them out. I take all my tools, trowels, hammer, and etc. out and go over everything. I look for stress or flaws. If everything is all right, I clean the tools and put them on a shelf.

I personally paint all of my water trapping tools with a fluorescent orange paint, The reason I do this is due to the fact that a couple of years ago I lost a set of 330-bodygrip setting tongs in a river in Southern Ohio. Now, granted this was no big monetary loss, but boy do I hate setting 330's by hand! That also is why I now go beaver trapping with big guys just kidding Tom). By the way, if any of you Southern beaver trappers find a pair of setting tongs, let me know.

Anyway, check your tool inventory and make a list of any new tools you may need. This is also a good time for packbasket upkeep and repair. Years ago when I carried a packbasket, I painted it with a camo pattern and then coated it with shellac and hung it upside down in the basement. This seemed to help preserve it a little better. Buckets and bags are simple. Empty them out, brush them out and bang them up.

Now I move on to the messy, stinky stuff (that is what my wife calls lure). First, if you have a lot of different types of lure, you need to separate them., fox, beaver, raccoon etc. I store all my lures in airtight plastic containers. Clean out your lure bucket and hang it up.

Next, I tackle the stakes and stabilizers. I have two large containers for stakes, One for wooden stakes and metal stakes, and a bucket for earth anchors. Check the cable and the ends of the earth anchors for stress or cable damage. Check all the wooden stakes for cracking or breaking wood and cut off any wire and store the stakes upright in your container.

Look over your metal stakes for any that are bent and check the swivels and lap links, then store them in your container When it comes to cleanup time, I put all the same size stabilizers together and hang them on nails on the wall in my shed. Then when it is cold dip time for my water traps my stabilizers are all neatly hanging on the wall ready for dipping. Just a side note here folks. I cold dip my water traps at the end of April or the beginning of May and then hang them under a tree until about the end of August. At that time they am boxed up until November.

Now, let's see, we have our backpacks and buckets cleaned, our tools cleaned and put on shelves, our stinky bottles are cleaned and stored in airtight contained and out stakes and stabilizers am checked and stored. Then what is this big pile of metal pieces and parts in the middle of our shed??? Oh yes, it is the heart and soul of our sport the traps.

First I separate our traps and put them in a pile according to size. I personally do the bodygrips first This seems easier for me. All the spring slapping and whacking your fingers and hands, OUCH! Divide them up according to size; 110, 220 and 330's. I keep all my traps in large, plastic sealed containers. The containers come in various shapes and sizes and usually at a quite reasonable price. They easily can be stacked on top of each other to save space. All of my trap boxes have been marked with permanent marker as to its content.

I personally have several hundred 110 bodygrips (1 spring) so I keep them separate from my 120 bodygrips (110 with 2 springs) plus I use my 120's during the summer for some nuisance jobs. That is another story!

I also have a few 280 bodygrips that I store in one of my 330 trap boxes, because I don't have many and I take them with me beaver trapping.

Next I pack up my large footholds #4's, #5's and #7.5's. I have a couple dozen of these, I have a large trap container that they all fit in very nicely.

Now I move on to fox and coyote footholds. I separate them from all my other traps. I do this because I am from the "old school". I still boil and wax canine traps. Around September or October I boil and wax all my canine traps that I boxed up. Some trappers like to box and wax traps at the end of the season and then store them until the start of next season, That is fine, but I like to get out at the end of September. I enjoy the weather and start boiling traps. That is how my Grandfather and my Uncles did it, so it is like a tradition with me.

Next I go to my raccoon, mink and muskrat traps and I cold dip these, like I mentioned before. Now is a great time to check all the chains and make sure the trap tags are in place and that all modifications are up to your standards.

I then check all skinning knives, including scrappers, cleaning away any blood or extra fat hanging on. A final wipe and I put it on the shelf for next year.

I then check my fleshing beam; wiping it down.

Wipe all your wire stretchers down with that greasy rag you just cleaned your fleshing beam with and also wipe down your wooden stretchers and check them for any split boards. You can then hang everything on either on the wall or from your shed rafters.

I then sweep the floor and get ready for the long wait I always make sure I have plenty of swivels, lap links, connecting rings and etc.. If I have any broken traps or any pieces missing, I write them down in a notebook so I can pick up those parts at the next couple of conventions I attend,

So next time you open your shed and say "Who Made This Big Mess?", start now, organize and be prepared for next season. You will be farther ahead, just don't tell your wife you swept out your shed! She may have future plans for you and that broom!