

OSTA Fur Auctions
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by Patti Conrad

Of the many benefits offered by the OSTA to its members the one that I would like to bring to your attention in this issue is the one that provides the members with the ability to sell their pelts at OSTA sponsored fur auctions.

The OSTA has had fur auctions in Xenia at Ison's Fur Company since December of 1992 and started the fur auctions in Zanesville in January of 1999. Wooster is the newest location for the auctions, which was added in January of 2003.

Although the auctions are open to OSTA members as well as non-members, as a member you are entitled to the benefit of a reduced price on the commission fee.

There are four auction dates for the 2003-2004 season at three separate locations to accommodate your trapline schedule. All the "what, where and when" information on OSTA fur auctions appears in this issue of the Buckeye Trapper. OSTA Treasurer, Steve Massie will be the contact person for all four of the auctions, so please call him for lot numbers if you did not get one at one of the Region Meets. You can reach him at 937-663-0287. Please read the ads in this issue for the dates and times on when to make your calls. Walk-ins the day of the sale are accepted and always welcome.

The auctions are attended by fur buyers; trappers, looking to sell their seasons catch; volunteers and even curious spectators. No one person is more important than the other. Without the trappers, we would have no fur for the buyers and without the buyers, why bother bringing your fur. It also takes manpower to run the auctions efficiently. That is where the volunteers come into play. They sort, grade and place the pelts on flats to be carried on to the auction table. That is when the auctioneer takes over to sell the fur for the best possible price.

Most all of the required tasks are done manually, but a computer is used to track the going price, the average and best price given for each fur. It also keeps a record of the amount of pelts sold, what grade, and how many of each type of fur crossed the auction table.

Buyers and sellers alike receive a print out of their day's activity before leaving for home. If everything goes right, everyone leaves satisfied at the end of the day.

The auctions are a great learning experience for young and new trappers. They are a good place to pick up "tips" on skinning, fleshing and stretching your pelts. A tip from a seasoned trapper for example, dispelling the old wives tale that you "stretch" your fur. You don't actually stretch your fur, you place them on a stretcher to keep them taut so that they keep their shape and to prevent them from shrinking or shriveling.

The auctions are a social gathering as well as a convenient place to buy or sell fur. Food and beverages are always available. Auctions are a place where experienced trappers blend with new trappers and share their ideas, methods, and stranger than truth trapline stories. There is always someone available to answer questions or ready to sign up a new member.

Volunteers are always needed and ALWAYS appreciated. You can also turn in your time to be recognized for Special Forces Hours. As your hours add up you receive recognition for those hours worked in the form of Special Forces items. Starting with a hat at 10 hours, and pins for 25 and 50 hours, you work your way up to a T-shirt at 100 hours. Not to mention a windbreaker for 250 hours, and a patch for the back of the windbreaker at 500 hours. Any amount of time that you can offer helps. I encourage you to please lend your support to the

OSTA Fur Auctions in any way that you can.

The OSTA has been working towards providing more information and demos on fur handling and fur grading at conventions, workshops and region meets to improve your fur checks.

If you are hesitating to volunteer at the auctions because you feel you are not qualified or you are not sure how things are done, just stop by and observe. Better yet, why not pick up the phone, call one of the Officers, Directors, or County Organizers, and just ask a few questions. You can also bring a youngster with you to one of the auctions so that they can see how the fur auctions are handled. ### Patti Conrad, 1244 Abbe Rd., Sheffield, OH 44054