

One of My Favorite Sets
Article from Sep - Oct 2003 Buckeye Trapper
by Zac Coblentz

I just thought I would pass along to my fellow Buckeye Trappers a favorite set of mine. Many of you may already use a similar set yourselves, some of you may find this set odd and out of place. Whatever the case may be, I must tell you that this set works very well for me in my area. Although I use a multitude of sets on my trap line, I often return to this "old reliable" set, to make a catch as well as to remake a set; which I will explain later. Before I go into detail on my favorite set, let me stress that I am in no way a professional trapper. In fact, I'm still learning and improving every season.

I call my favorite set the "chaff set dirt hole". You may notice that this set is actually a combination of two well known sets. I'm not trying to reinvent the wheel here, just trying to improve it. In order to create this favorite set of mine, you must have some kind of chaff. Hay and straw are the first things that might come to mind, but actually grass clippings, leaf litter, fresh dirt, and cattail fluff all make fine chaff for this set. The idea of the chaff is eye appeal, you want chaff that is light, fluffy, and spreads easily. For my chaff I use barn dirt. It consists of dry and pulverized manure, hay, and soil, and is usually obtained easily from any farm. I shovel and bag my chaff in old feed sacks and transfer the chaff to the set via five-gallon bucket.

To make the set I find a likely spot where furbearers frequent such as a field bordering woods, creek lines, and fence rows. As with any trap set, location is the key to being successful. To make the set I dig a dirt hole next to a natural backing, like a rock or log, just as if I was making a standard dirt hole set. I then take my five-gallon bucket of chaff and spread it evenly in a circular pattern in front of the backing and around the dirt hole. You do not need a whole five-gallon bucket of chaff, just a few handfuls. The dirt hole can be of any size, but about a three-inch diameter hole is what I use. Also I like to dig my dirt hole strait down and rather deep, not at an angle. Now on the outside edge of the chaff circle I make a trap bed, keep in mind the distance of the trap from the dirt hole. For fox and raccoon I like the trap closer to the hole than for coyotes. I bed the trap and sift it over with natural dirt from the area, I also use available ground debris to make the trap look just like the surrounding ground. For bait in the dirt hole I usually use flesh chunk bait, then sprinkle a little chaff in the hole to cover the bait. Gland lure can be used at the lip of the hole, but it's not necessary, to finish the set I mist the dirt hole and backing with fox urine.

Most furbearers approach this set readily, but are reluctant to step in the chaff. Instead they work along the edge of the chaff and the dirt hole centers their attention over the trap. I think the chaff and dirt hole keep the animals attention ahead and not necessarily at their feet and the edge of the chaff circle, thus they fall victim to the trap on the outside edge. I have successfully taken both canines and raccoon in this exact set. Sweet lures can be substituted if raccoons are targeted, but they usually come readily to canine bait or lure.

This favorite set of mine seems to work well in my area, however, it is not the only set I use. I have noticed that this set works well in areas where furbearers are used to seeing dirt holes and flat sets; the chaff just changes the whole look. I also have noticed that this set works well as a remake when a fur bearer has already been caught at a traditional set. The area is already torn up with lots of dirt and ground debris, I just use this as my chaff, make a dirt hole and bed a trap at the edge. The chaff from the remake already smells like the animal you have captured plus the lure, bait, and urine you used at the set originally.

Hopefully this set might make a welcome addition to your bag of tricks. As stated before, it works for me in my area, and I'm sure if made correctly it will work for you. Just remember location and cleanliness are the keys to trapping; good sets just top it off. Good luck and may your stretchers be full. ### Zac Coblentz, 8019 Battin-Howell Rd., South Charleston, OH 45368

Editor's Note: Zac is a trapper from South Charleston, Ohio who is a member of the OSTA and says he is an

avid reader of the Buckeye Trapper. He always thought it would be neat to write an article for a magazine and when he saw us advertise for articles, photos and clippings from the members, he thought he would write and pass on his favorite set along with his drawing. I hope he gets as much enjoyment out of seeing his article in print as, I know, all the members will in reading it. Thanks for sharing your idea with the members Zac. We look forward to reading your next article.