

# NMTA HOF

## Floyd David Sollman

( Born July 28, 1966 )

Dave grew up in small town Indiana. He was involved in agricultural activities most of his youth and hunted, fished and trapped. In his teens he was employed as a skinner for a fox rancher / trapper and wrestled for his high school. After high school, Dave studied Agricultural Equipment at Purdue University before enlisting into the US Army (1986-1989) and was stationed in Germany . After serving his country and being honorably discharged (E-4) he returned to Indy and his interests in agriculture, where he worked for over a decade at a John Deere dealership. Dave rapidly moved up in the dealership to become the branch manager.

Shortly after coming home Dave married and soon was a proud father of his daughter Nikki. Much was going on in the trapping world during this time; most of it bad. These were the years when trapping was being lost in many states which got Dave's attention. He attended a meeting of the ITA and was shocked , for in his interpretation, the situation was such that trapping losses would continue if things weren't changed. Leadership skills often get the best of folks and luckily for the trappers of this country Dave spoke up and was reeled in by the ITA officers.



As he had done with John Deere, Dave rapidly moved upward in the ITA becoming its president in 1990. On the national scene Dave joined the NTA BOD in 1992 and was named Director of the Year in 1993. His take charge nature caught the attention of prominent NTA leaders; most notably NTA President, Scott Hartman and Executive Council member, Dr. Bill Jones. Dave was appointed to the Executive Council in 1993, became General Organizer and NTA President (1999-2004).

Even before joining the NTA board Dave was active in trapping affairs at the national and international levels. As early as 1990, Dave was involved with the development of Trap Standards; first as an advisor and then as a member of the US Traps Standards Working Group. During this same time the European Union ban on fur and subsequent BMP process were hot topics among America's trappers. Dave was instrumental in collecting data and developing "The Red Book " that was used to successfully lobby for and pass the US-EU Agreed Minute that enabled America's wild fur to continue to flow to European markets. As a result of these and other efforts the NTA rose to a place of prominence and respect within the national community of wildlife managers. Through his diligent persistence in making certain that the interests of trappers were represented and heard throughout the BMP process, we are still trapping and selling our pelts to the markets of the world.

Dave was on a "roll". The following is a partial list of events and actions in which he was involved: fought in congress to retain trapping on National Wildlife Refuges, reversed US Fish and Wildlife's revocation of exemption for trappers to export fur, successful fundraising to defeat trapping ban ballot initiatives in Alaska and Oregon, coalition building among sportsman's groups, developed ties with the national and international fur trade, established regional conferences to educate trappers on and about the BMP process, improvement of CITES tags and numerous state level litigations, initiatives, legislation and regulatory actions. He also was at the helm during the formation of the International Standards Organization ISO committee which developed official protocols for evaluation of "humane" restraining and killing traps.

During this time the fur industry of the United States was also re-organizing. Fur wRaps the Hill was being formed and the NTA was asked to join. Dave represented the trapping industry in this organization. Once again, yet another group of industry leaders rapidly recognized Dave's cut-to-the-chase attitude in getting to the point and finding solutions for critical problems and voted him Chairman of Fur wRaps the Hill and ultimately hired him as their first Executive director.

There were many "side trips" during his journey. Dave's marriage of 13 years ended after which he remarried and young David was born. His employment with John Deere ended following a mega merger of the dealership and Dave found himself no longer able to serve as NTA president. His announced resignation as NTA president prompted the Executive Council to hire Dave as the NTA's Executive Director; to keep him working for the betterment of the nations trappers. During Dave's presidency the transformation of the NTA initiated by Scot Hartman, Bill Jones and others moved forward. Destroying the Myth and the Circle of Life videos were produced and a proactive approach to defending trapping was born. The NTA began to change and regional conferences / conventions were begun. With the developing awareness of these advances in trapping came international respect and financial support for many trapping projects from the International Fur Trade Federation. Somewhere amongst all this the world fur trade leaders also recognized Dave's skills and seated him on the IFTF council bringing the issues facing America's trappers front and center on the international stage.

Trapping continued to come under attack from every conceivable direction. In all cases trappers held their ground; no more states lost trapping. NM was one of the states with a target squarely attached to its back and NMTA leaders turned to the three national organizations for help. It was Dave Sollman who responded and offered up his skill set, which now came with years of political savvy unequalled by any other in the industry. Again, with Dave's leadership, the full force of the NTA and Fur Industry was made available to NM's trappers.

The revival of attacks on NM trapping started over a decade ago. Since then the NMTA has partnered closely with Dave Sollman and as such with the fur industry. This partnership was fostered by Dave and, out of the enduring respect for Dave's knowledge and skills, by New Mexico trappers. Over the last 10 or so years NM has seen many attacks and during each has had Dave Sollman and the fur industry at its side. Dave was and now is a member of the NMTA and is a member of the NMTA Legislative Action Committee. He has visited our state and trapped here a number of times. He has been instrumental in providing counsel to the last three NMTA presidents and has been directly involved in the strategic planning of every battle the NMTA has fought; we have won resounding victories in all. For example, it was through Fur wRaps the Hill, Dave and NMTA leaders that the NM Department of Game and Fish was introduced to the law firm of Kelley, Drye and Warren and went on to possibly the most significant defeat ever handed to an animal rights group attacking trappers and trapping. Also, it was Dave Sollman on the phone, through e-mails and tele-viewing our legislative hearings who monitored and counseled the war we waged in Santa Fe this past legislative session.

Most in the know emphatically state that Dave Sollman has done and continues to do more to protect and preserve trapping in America than any other individual. In a recent phone conversation, past NTA president, Scott Hartman stated; "Dave Sollman is my greatest achievement, I am very proud of him. If it wasn't for Dave I don't know where trapping would be now".

Over the past 25 plus years Dave has been leading the way in the fight to preserve our trapping heritage. This journey has not been without controversy and personal costs. It was during this period that the World went on-line and as with so many human endeavors, there is a very dark side to the internet. Personal attacks, misinformation, armchair quarterbacking and downright devious lies have been propagated and directed toward Dave Sollman. Dave is now currently the Executive Director of Fur wRaps the Hill, representing at the State, Federal and International level, the interests of the entire fur industry, including producers (mink farmers, trappers), manufacturers, retailers and the various U.S. and Canadian auction houses. Dave also represents fur industry interests on a number of other organizations involved in the development of hunting, trapping and animal use policies. He is a member of the Board of Directors and former Treasurer of the Fur Information Council of America, which represents the interests of fur manufacturers and retailers.

Seldom does a legislative issue arise in Washington DC or the states, involving the fur industry or trapping, that the Sollman Group does not have a preeminent role in the development of strategy to manage the issue. Dave combines a sophisticated understanding of the political process with a professional and personal knowledge of his fur industry constituency. The success of many legislative initiatives can be directly tied to Dave's involvement. Such successes, include the defeat of the EU leghold trapping ban, which led to the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards; the enactment of the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, which made any destructive action against an animal enterprise (including a trap line) a federal crime; the enactment of the Fur Product Labeling Act, which specifically

exempts trappers from any labeling requirements – and exemption which Dave helped write; and the defeat of numerous state and local trapping bans and prohibitions across the United States. New Mexico is always on Dave's radar screen and he has worked consistently with the NMTA, providing free policy advice to the organization on issues that go to the heart of this group's very existence.