

THE IDEAL ALMANAC

October 2020

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Tracking Is Not Just For The Woods

Hello and welcome to the October edition of the Ideal Almanac.

Many people think of New Jersey as a place for the Jersey Shore, the Turnpike, oil tanks and gritty cities. But where I grew up, in the suburbs, I was fortunate to have a father who was way ahead of his time. While I did play “normal sports” there was a whole other part of my life that was focused on hunting, target shooting, fishing and being outside and enjoying nature. I saw a whole other side to New Jersey than almost everyone else especially those my age. I confess I was not always thrilled with the way he taught us, including the nature walks where he would teach us about trees, flowers and birds. But learning how to safely use fishing rods, guns and knives has been a constant benefit all my life. There was one other thing he taught us which came into play a few hours ago. During those nature walks, especially in the winter he also taught us how to track animals and identify them by the prints they left.

We have been having trouble with “some type of animal” that was crawling up inside our grill and causing extensive damage. No matter how well we cleaned it and sealed the outside cover, something was getting inside. We had been getting pretty frustrated until tonight. I was



on our porch to check to see if the grill had been “hit” and I noticed some fresh markings on the wood. The paw prints were leading away from the grill so I knew whatever left them had been inside once again creating havoc. But this time I knew what it was. About a year ago we had trapped a family of raccoons, in a fruitless attempt to get the well fed groundhog living under our porch. That have been transported to a different location by Tim, the specialist we had hired and we thought the issue was over. However, the paw prints proved our problem was back, there was no doubt in my mind. I called Tim and within two hours there were now two traps set-up near

the grill. I have every confidence that by tomorrow morning when I go out to bike something will be trapped. By the way, one of his prime weapons he uses is Hostess Twinkies for bait. It is probably a whole family so he will need to trap and transplant them all. Who knows maybe we will actually get the groundhog that had started the original search.

Editors Note: We did trap a raccoon the next morning-traps are going up again for more.

Read more of Andrew's blogs at:
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