

PROPOSAL 154

5 AAC 92.550. Areas closed to trapping.

5 AAC 92.095. Unlawful methods of taking furbearers; exceptions.

Require signs be posted at all active trapping access points in Unit 7 as follows:

1) SOLUTION:

We are requesting the Board of Game amend 5 AAC 92.550 to establish mandatory signs posted at all access points of active trapping in the area. We are requesting these changes to reduce conflicts with trappers and increase safety among the rising number of multi-use groups in Unit 7.

2) REGULATORY LANGUAGE:

ADD Regulatory Language for Unit 7: “Active Trapping signs posted at all access points to operating traplines. Signs must be: 1) at least 8” x 11”, 2) brightly colored (orange or yellow), 3) waterproof/tear proof, and 4) posted at eye level clearly denoting active trapping in the area. Must include ADF&G license number or Fish & Wildlife ID number; contact information optional.”

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

1) **ISSUE:** We are requesting the board amend 5 AAC 92.550 to establish mandatory signs posted at all access points of active trapping in the area. We are requesting these changes to reduce conflicts with trappers and increase safety among the rising number of multi-use groups in Unit 7.

Posted trapping signs would alert user groups to trapping in the area and give them the opportunity to take safety precautions. Trapping signs would also alert safety personnel to added dangers if called to respond to an emergency requiring the use of Search and Rescue Dogs to find injured, lost, or buried victims. **A local Cooper Landing trapper already posts signs in a plastic bag warning of his traplines, and he supports a regulation to add “active trapping” signs indicating the presence of traplines as do several of the Cooper Landing AC members.**

Mandatory posted signs are in line with the Alaska Trappers Association Official Position Statement “Trapline Signs” that was adopted on September 27th, 2016, and states:

“The Alaska Trappers Association encourages trappers in road-accessible regions of the State to post signs near major points of access to their personal trapline trails. These signs should explain that there are traps and/or snares on or near the trail. The signs could also include the trappers name and contact information. These signs are intended to alert other trail users of the purpose of the trail, so that they can avoid conflict with the trapper. This approach of posting signs should be beneficial for everyone involved.”

Trapping signs would also be in alignment with the Forest Service’s Our Values Statement, which includes the intention of managing for “*Safety. In every way: physical, psychological, and social.*”

This is a low cost, low maintenance way to reduce conflicts between trappers and recreational users, and allows trapping to continue.

2) WHY: The community of Cooper Landing is located on the Sterling Highway at the headwaters of the Kenai River. Easily accessible by road, Cooper Landing is located only 100 hundred miles south of Anchorage, the largest city in the state. Cooper Landing's primary economy is based on summer recreation and tourism to the area, however, as winter recreation in the area increases, Cooper Landing businesses could take advantage of this opportunity and extend their seasonal offerings. To encourage the increasing number of family-friendly, active, outdoor recreational pursuits (e.g., winter biking, cross-country skiing, back country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, trail running, and back country cabin rentals) in the area, it would be beneficial for business owners to be able to accurately market Cooper Landing as a fun, safe, and uniquely beautiful area for visitors to enjoy with their family and pets.

As of the 2019 census, there are 731,545 residents of the state of Alaska, and based on sealing records, license sales and the annual "Trapper Questionnaire," the Alaska Department of Fish and Game estimates 2,500 to 3,500 trappers in the state.

By adopting this trapping regulation in Unit 7, the Board of Game would better represent the majority of its constituents and better align with current area resident's recreational use.

PROPOSED BY: The Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee (HQ-F22-010)
