

PROPOSAL 148

5 AAC 92.550(9). Areas closed to trapping.

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

What solution do you recommend? In other words, if the board adopted your solution, what would the new regulation say?

1) SOLUTION:

We request that the Board amend 5 ACC 92.550(9) to add a subpart (C), adding a requirement that signs be posted by trappers at all access points to active trapping. This change will reduce conflicts with trappers and increase safety among the rising number of multi-use groups in Game Management Unit 7.

2) REGULATORY LANGUAGE:

Areas Closed to Trapping The following areas are closed to the trapping of furbearers as indicated: (1-6) No change requested.

ADD Regulatory Language for Unit 7: 5AAC 92.550(9)(C) “Trappers setting traps in Unit 7 are required to post signs at all access points to operating traplines. Signs must be: 1) at least 8”x11”, 2) brightly colored (orange or yellow), 3) waterproof/tear-proof, and 4) posted at eye level denoting active trapping in the area. Must include Alaska Public Safety Information Network (ASPIN) ID number or contact information for the trapper. If the trapper’s sign uses the ASPIN ID no, the trapper’s identity would be held confidential and released only to law enforcement.

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

ISSUE:

We request that the Board amend 5 ACC 92.550(9) to establish a requirement that signs be posted at all access points to active trapping. This change will reduce conflicts with trappers and increase safety among the rising number of multi-use groups in GMU 7.

Mandatory posted signs are in line with the Alaska Trappers Association's 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 trapper’s 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.”

“Active Trapping” informational signs aligns with the Forest Service’s Our Values Statement, which includes the intention of managing for “*Safety. In every way: physical, psychological, and social.*”

The District Ranger for the Chugach National Forest supports proposals for regulatory measures of 100-yard setbacks and trapline signage. It is the intention of the NFS to allow all user groups to utilize multi-use public lands safely and to balance the opportunities for all. *See attachment*

This is a low-cost, low-maintenance way to reduce conflicts between trappers and recreational users, create a shared responsibility, and support trappers' rights.

WHY:

Posted trapping signs would alert user groups to the presence of trapping in the area and allow them to take safety precautions. Trapping signs would also alert safety personnel to additional dangers if they were called to respond to an emergency requiring the use of Search and Rescue Dogs to find injured, lost, or buried victims. Ten other states have set a precedent for signage regulations; *see attachment*. A former local Cooper Landing trapper posted signs warning of his traplines and supports a regulation to add “active trapping” signs, as do several of the Cooper Landing AC members and members of the ATA.

Year-round outdoor recreation is a significant and growing segment of the Cooper Landing area's economy. Cooper Landing's primary economy is based on summer recreation and tourism; however, as winter recreation in the area increases, Cooper Landing businesses want to extend their seasonal offerings. With the anticipated bypass completion and the addition of Three Bears grocery store in the future, year-round recreational activity is expected to increase. To encourage the increasing number of family-friendly, active, outdoor recreational pursuits (e.g., winter biking, cross-country skiing, backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, trail running, ice fishing, bird hunting, and backcountry cabin rentals) in the area, it would benefit 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.

Signage is a valuable precaution to avoid conflicts. The Precautionary Principle is widely recognized in international law and policy, especially in environmental and public health contexts. It suggests that if an action or policy has the potential to cause harm to the public or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. This puts the onus on dog owners to be aware of potential risks around a legal trapline. We seek regulations to ensure the safety of all area user groups to reduce the risk of accidental encounters.

As of the 2024 census, there are 741,147 residents of Alaska. 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, meaning only .4% of the Alaskan population traps. By adopting this trapping regulation in GMU 7, the Board of Game would better represent the majority of its constituents and better align with current area residents' recreational use.

Note: The proposal submission included attachments which are available on the proposal book website at: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.proposalbook .

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

Several members of our Cooper Landing AC endorse this proposal and two members of the Cooper Landing Safe Trails have been trappers.

The Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee met in April 2025 with members of the Southcentral Trappers Association to work together on solutions to reduce trap/pet conflicts; during the discussion we gained a better understanding and appreciation of the trappers' concerns. Advocating for pet owner responsibility and not overreaching with more setback requests in the future were two concerns we heard clearly.

We took careful consideration of all land users while drafting this proposal, which will reduce conflicts between all user groups of shared recreational areas. We value the preservation, history, and tradition of trapping in Alaska for current and future generations. Providing a safe buffer on the trails listed will reduce conflicts and potentially improve trappers' public image for those opposed to the activity.

PROPOSED BY: The Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee (HQ-F25-021)
