

Organization: Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee

SIGNAGE

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1: What Regulation do you wish to change?

There are no current federal subsistence regulations regarding signage for trappers in unit 7 on the Kenai Peninsula.

2: How would the new regulation read?

Add the Following Language to Trapping Regulations For Unit 7.

"Active Trapping signs posted 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

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."

3: Why should this regulation change be made?

We are requesting these changes to reduce conflicts with trappers and increase safety among the rising number of multi-use groups in GMU 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. Some local Cooper Landing trappers already post signs in plastic bags warning of their traplines, and they support a regulation to add "active trapping" signs indicating the presence of traplines, as do several 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 27<sup>th</sup>, 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*

A difficult to measure yet extremely important aspect of the current situation is the emotional stress and fear associated with the threat of traps close to multi-use areas. This has been indicated via local meetings and the survey; people simply do not go to their favorite places with their dogs for fear of a trap encounter. Another group affected is the bird hunters with bird dogs; these dogs are typically well-behaved and under strict voice command, yet there was a fatality on a highway pullout up north where an irresponsible trapper placed a trap 50 feet from the road.

User groups and land uses are expanding and changing, and the need to change these regulations is overdue. The disproportionate number of recreational users to trappers is 99.6% v. .4% yet our public lands are almost 100% in favor of the subsistence users. A balance of uses on public lands is required by the USFS and by ANLICA, provided that it does not significantly impact subsistence users. As it stands, the regulated use favors trappers in accessibility and allocation.

A compromise between the user groups appears to be gaining support and we believe a respectful resolution is possible. It is only through adopted regulations that recreationists may have peace of mind and certainty about trap locations. Posting "Active Trapping" signs is a regulation adopted in many states and would be a positive step in the right direction for Alaska.