

June 30, 2025

RE: Wildlife Regulatory Proposals, WP 26-18, WP 26-19, WP 26-20, WP 26-21, WP 26- 22 & WP 26-23

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in support of the Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee's proposals that would regulate trapping to 100 yards back from beaches, road pullouts, trails, either side of indicated roads, the Summit Lake Rec. Area as well as a 50-yard setback from campgrounds, which would be in alignment with the Board of Game regulations. I also support WP26-21, which would require trappers to post signs notifying others of active trapping in the area.

These areas are multi-use areas that have seen an increase in recreational use due to the presence of younger families in the area, as well as more skiers, hikers, snowshoers, and skijorers. Cooper Landing is working to become a thriving year-round community, rather than just a summer seasonal destination. The addition of the 3 Bears convenience store, the eventual bypass, and the 395 tract, which is slated for a winter recreational area, and fat tire, studded bike rentals for winter enthusiasts to explore the backcountry, supports this.

WP26-23

I own year-round vacation rentals, and when I advise my guests to be cautious of traps along the trails, the immediate response is often to go somewhere else. This has an economic ripple effect that is damaging. There seems to be consideration for all users; the trails that are specified are not the entire trail, such as the Resurrection or Russian, but rather the parts of the trail that people would utilize in a day's activity. It's not a significant inconvenience to have a trapper go a little further by snowmachine, or walk 100yds off the trail. The best outcome would be for all users to be able to pursue their chosen activity safely and harmoniously.

WP26-20

The Kenai Peninsula has the reputation of being "Anchorage's Playground". This is evidenced by the numerous vehicles in the Summit Lake Recreation Area in the winter, almost all with ski racks. This is also an avalanche area, and several search and rescue personnel who utilize dogs are concerned for their dogs' safety with traps. This is a safety issue that warrants careful consideration. Skiers have reported active traps in highly used areas, and I've heard canine search and rescue teams are reluctant to go into those areas for fear that their well-trained dogs might get trapped. There is plenty of backcountry

available for trappers to pursue their passion safely, without overlapping with non-consumptive users.

WP26-18

The 3 beach areas asked for are a very small percentage of the entire Kenai Lake. A popular beach referred to locally as “Waikiki Beach” on the Snug Harbor side of the Lake was the site of a puppy getting caught and killed in a trap, which died in the arms of its owner. That woman was a friend of mine, and that never should have happened. On the opposite side of the lake, a trap was found still set out of season on Williams Beach, which is also in the proposal for setbacks.

The Cooper Landing community supports trap setbacks, as proven by a 2015 survey, where 83% of respondents wanted regulations in place, and again in 2021, when 90% were in favor. Many respondents advocated for a setback of up to a mile or no trapping at all. We are a tight-knit community of neighbors, and these safe buffers would be beneficial to all users, separating the activities of stakeholders and being a more responsible land use management.

WP26-21,

I have attended two meetings with trappers in the last year, and I heard from the trappers themselves that they supported making their traplines. When asked if they were concerned about having their traps tampered with or their product being removed, one gentleman responded, “I’d rather have that than kill a dog”. I was impressed by his conviction. I agree that with education, communication, and signs, there can be fewer interactions between dogs and traps. Many states have this law in effect.

WP26-19

Our campgrounds are groomed for skiing and are heavily used for this purpose as well as snowshoeing, fat tire biking and family enjoyment. We live in a rural area like Cooper Landing to “let dogs be dogs” and run and play alongside their owners; I was witness to scores of dogs running free with their skier owners in Montana on a trail much like our campground trails, and it was an example to follow. The scent of a baited trap is too much for any dog to ignore, but hopefully, some buffer will help to curtail encounters. The Board of Game passed a 50 yd. setback from campground perimeters, which is less than hoped for, but with this in place, it seems wise for enforcement purposes to align with this decision.

Please listen to the voice of our community, and as we grow and evolve into a more recreational area, making the adjustments for the safety, well-being, and creating

opportunities for the majority of land users (99.7% of Alaskans DON'T trap) just makes sense.

Respectfully,

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