

Proposed Changes to Trapping Policy in Manitoba's Provincial Parks and Other Crown Lands with Recreational Developments

Report on Public Comments

Overview

In 2013-14 the Manitoba government conducted a review of trapping in provincial parks and other high use recreation areas on Crown lands.

Registered Trapline and Open Trapping areas have a long history of co-existing with recreation based developments in provincial parks and Crown lands. However, the use of provincial parks and surrounding areas is changing and trapping policy needs to adapt.

To address public safety concerns, the province has developed a number of proposed changes to its trapping policies and regulations. Trapping restrictions within developed and high-use recreational areas are proposed for most parks. The province is further proposing to increase communication and education. This will help share the history and value of trapping, and encourage responsible enjoyment of parks and Crown lands.

Information packages containing all of the above details were mailed to potentially-impacted organizations and trappers, and made available to the public online. Feedback was encouraged, including the nature of impacts of the proposed changes to trapping activities and options for mitigation of the impacts.

Public review gathered a wide range of opinions that reflect the views of trappers, park users, and other Manitobans. These comments are presented on the following pages and will be taken into consideration before implementing changes to trapping regulations. These are excerpts of the most-heard comments and do not include every one received.

Impacts on Trappers

Many people expressed concern that trappers were being targeted unfairly, and that the illegal act of allowing dogs to go unleashed was impacting the legal act of trapping. It was suggested trappers be compensated for a potential increase in workload, due to the increased distance trappers need to travel due to restrictions placed on the most accessible trapping areas. A similar number of respondents believe this would also create safety concerns for trappers, negatively impact trapper's income and may cause conflicts and unhealthy competition amongst trappers.

Several comments focussed on the potential for an increase in human-wildlife conflict that restrictions would cause, especially in the areas where restrictions are proposed.

Concern was also conveyed for possible infringement of Treaty rights and the rights of Indigenous people.

Alternatives

Many people feel a compromise is possible and have offered a number of alternatives to complete restrictions. Several people suggested that restrictions be lifted for all trails that are closed to public use during the winter trapping season. Extensive recommendations focussed on the use of dog proof trap sets, which would allow trapping to continue, but minimize the risk to park users and their pets. These specialized traps can be placed on trees or underwater where dogs typically would not go but many of the targeted species will. Several individuals believe that each park should have its own trapping restrictions, as each park has unique attributes that could be examined on a case-by-case basis. Others felt that some individual trails within parks should have their own restrictions due to their unique use type and history.

Public Awareness

If dog owners followed park leash laws, many respondents believe there would be no need for the policy changes. Some went a step further and requested an increase to public education in regards to pet safety and leash laws within parks. Others would like to see it mandatory for all trappers to clearly mark their trap lines, which could decrease the potential for accidents.

Frequent requests were made for more discussions and public education before the changes are officially put into place. Several people would like to see a campaign to educate the public on the ecological values of trapping. Trapping can reduce wildlife overpopulation and eliminate problem wildlife such as invasive species.

Other Comments

A few respondents provided anti-trapping opinion. Some respondents expressed concern for the potential danger trapping poses to threatened or endangered species in Manitoba. Other respondents felt that all provincial parks should be completely closed to all trapping.

For more information about this newsletter or the proposed changes to trapping policy, please contact:

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