

Statement to the BOG Meeting March 2015

I am grateful for the opportunity to address the BOG on our **Trapping Proposal 180 for Cooper Landing**. At the March 2013 Board meeting in Kenai I was advised to return to CL, form a local committee, put together and submit a proposal of our concerns. Our **Committee for Safe Public Lands and Trails** has followed those recommendations. We also held local meetings. The Alaska Trappers Assoc. first publically offered to cooperate with us, but since then a local ATA trapper walked out of an attempted meeting saying the ATA would only talk with us if we **withdraw our Proposal 180**. We obviously haven't done that for a number of reasons.

- 1) Our proposal follows **Board procedure and establishes an official track record** of our attempts to address our concerns coherently.
- 2) Our proposal **establishes a base** from which we can cooperate with other groups in the future.
- 3) The ATA offer of **"informal verbal agreements"** is questionable to us. Such agreements are **not binding or enforceable in anyway**. The **Trapper's Code of Ethics** itself is simply an outline of **recommended behavior** and not all Alaska trappers are actual members of ATA.
- 4) There is **no continuity into the future with informal agreements**. What is agreed informally today can easily be forgotten over time. Since the people involved on both sides change, it may end up that no one is accountable or responsible.
- 5) The **ATA acted on its own accord** this February and placed numerous advisory signs in CL encouraging safer trapping practices and to respect other users. This is appreciated in a way but may actually complicate matters since these signs **avoid the issue of whether or not traps are actually being set in public use spots**. Anxiety is not relieved at all. Such signs may attract novice inexperienced trappers by announcing though not recommended, it is **Okay and Legal to Trap** in Public Use areas.
- 6) Proposal 180 requests "Public Use - Closed to Trapping" **regulations for 250 foot setbacks** for appropriate areas around our community. Our Proposal appears lengthy because we were advised to be very specific about what we ask for. However, our proposal is intended to be a **flexible framework for cooperation** to identify equitable spaces for trapping limitations.

There seem to be **three possibilities** that can happen now:

- 1) The Board can outright **approve** our Proposal 180 as it is - encouraged by the public local support we have gained and submitted.
- 2) The Board can outright **reject** our Proposal 180 – with various justifications for doing so.
- 3) Or maybe the BOG could **approve our Proposal 180 with a stipulation to mandate cooperation** between our CL group, the ATA, the Wildlife Authorities and other entities, like the Kenai Peninsula Borough, that may have a stake in the matter. This would prevent any group from walking out on discussions which the ATA has already felt entitled to do.

The **changing demographics in Cooper Landing** due to population growth and visitor pressure stress that CL is **not a local-use bush community**. It is a highly accessible rural community located on the main Sterling highway at the traffic bottleneck corridor that provides access to the entire Kenai Peninsula. It is a year around trails and park destination for visitors from far and near and is frequented by families and people who deserve reasonably safe recreational areas.

We need to **establish a framework** which can withstand the **test of time** within which trapping and multi-use **conflicts can be reduced** and adjusted into the future. We believe this can be done through **reasonable, recognizable and enforceable regulations**. We have valid concerns that informal agreements will side step our safety issues and prove to be erratic, inefficient, unenforceable and therefore ineffective in the long run. **And none of us in CL feel we have the legal authority to approve informal agreements.**

We hope to have the BOG approve our request for reasonable regulations with, if deemed necessary, an open and flexible stipulation for working out boundary and setback agreements between the concerned parties for final Board approval. This is not an issue of Pro or Anti Trapping, or if someone wants to wear fur or not, but it is recognition of demographic changes and a willingness to cooperate in dealing with them to keep multi-use conflict matters from getting out of hand.

We believe that area configuration and boundaries are where compromise must occur and would very much like to work from this premise. We wish to avoid conflicts with trapping like those pictured below (not photos from CL) which have occurred on numerous occasions locally over recent years.



Thank You,

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The Committee for Safe Public Trails and Lands.
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That was my official testimony. If I still have a moment I would like to add a concluding statement.

A lot of people are getting bent out of shape over our Proposal 180 for Cooper Landing. And this of course is disturbing. Not because certain people disagree with us; that is natural since we are all concerned about our own rights. But what is disturbing is **why** our requests create such vehement opposition from some quarters. Some of the arguments against our Proposal are disturbing as well, and should be examined for legitimacy.

When you look closely at **who is asking, why we're asking, and what we're asking for**, there should be concern that this issue is stirring up any condemnation at all. Our requests come from senior citizens, doctors, teachers, engineers, lodge managers, drift boat company owners, retired professionals, current and retired North Slope oilfield workers, community volunteers, builders, mushers, so on, all who are looking for solutions. So it's safe to say this is not a liberal conspiracy to take away trappers rights. We are asking for reasonable trapping set-back regulations in high multi-use public areas and a way to equitably adjust them, not a cessation of trapping altogether.

Ken Green

10 March, 2015.

The ATA “Working Together” with Cooper Landing

(1) In February 2015, The Alaska Trappers Association took it upon itself to post a number of signs around Cooper Landing. This has raised some relevant issues:

a) This approach although appearing positive adroitly sidesteps the issue of whether trapping is occurring in inappropriate areas which is a key question in Proposal 180.

b) After the signs went up, the ATA (through a local trapper) refused to discuss our trapping concerns in Cooper Landing unless our Proposal 180 requesting “Public Use – Closed to Trapping” setback regulations was completely withdrawn. The trapper walked out on an attempted meeting to discuss possibilities for boundaries. This shows a lack of cooperation.

c) Signage such as the ATA *advisory* signs may be ineffective:

i) By not indicating whether trapping is occurring or not, there is no relaxation of anxiety due to possible trap threats to other users, uncertainty is just as high if not higher with advisory signage than without;

ii) Brightly colored signs can attract inexperienced novice or unscrupulous trappers by announcing trapping is Okay and Legal even if not recommended;

iii) Recommendation signs are not enforceable or compulsory. Without penalties they can be ignored; (advisory fishing signs are not seriously considered to promote lawful fishing conduct)

iv) Advisory signs provide no long-term continuity in Cooper Landing and may not relieve conflicts or public resentment to perceived intrusive trapping.

(2) There is no accurate number estimate of the trapping community. ATA lifetime membership per its website is approximately 260 for 2014 but there seems to be no public access to yearly or multi-year membership numbers. The Alaska Fish and Game issued per its website: 36,147 resident trapping licenses and 113 non-resident trapping licenses which equals a total number of 36,260 trapping licenses for 2014. This does not include older residents over 65 with Senior Licenses and youngsters under 16 years who do not need licenses. These statistics question the extent of control and influence the ATA has over the behavior of trappers in Alaska in general. A majority of the Alaska trapping community may not be directly committed to the ATA.

(3) It is argued that “Public Use – Closed to Trapping” setback regulations will increase burdensome government controls and complicate enforcement. Contrarily, such regulations will give other users besides trappers Legal Recourse in conflict situations. As it is now, only trappers have any legal protection or rights.

(4) The ATA points out that dogs should be leashed and children should be under control. This is true but not relevant to Proposal 180 requests for trapping setback regulations. Dogs kept under control and/or on leashes are subject to threat from traps set alongside roads, pull-outs, scenic stops, trails, campgrounds, walkways, neighborhoods, schools and anywhere else a trapper feels entitled to trap. Countless reported conflicts attest to this. A leashed dog is not protected from improperly set traps and children will always be at risk. Presently, except for recommendations there are no improperly set traps where there are no enforced regulations.

(5) Two dog walking areas in Fairbanks are touted by the ATA (see e-mail quotes below with a local Cooper Landing ATA associated trapper):

a) “The mutual voluntary approach was successfully arrived at after a lengthy collaborative process in the Fairbanks area to help address user concerns; specifically dog/trap interactions.”

Rebuttal: The two areas seem to be distant and very inadequate as a template for Cooper Landing: “The attached files contain aerial photos of the two areas where ATA and the Boro have agreed to post signs related to trapping and responsible dog ownership. One is east of town. The other is west of town.” (e-mail quote from Randolph Zarnke present President of the ATA who forwarded two maps to CL). The actual success of these agreements has not been verified except that the ATA is happy with them. From Google Earth it was determined that the two areas are:

i) The Salcha School Area on the Richardson Highway which is apparently a cross country ski area approximately 35 miles from downtown Fairbanks, south of North Pole and Eielson AFB.

ii) The Cripple Creek area appears to be within or between subdivisions about 8 miles out the Parks Highway from downtown Fairbanks.

b) “It is an innovative approach since it works outside the customary regulatory process thus avoiding the heaping on to the ever-expanding, increasingly burdensome body of governmental regulation.” (local’s e-quote as above)

Rebuttal: We disagree that this approach is innovative in any way except to favor the ATA’s aversion to regulations. We will continue to work within the regulatory process and compromise with what boundaries can be established as Public Use – Closed to Trapping areas and setbacks. We believe informal agreements could be more burdensome in CL than regulations.

c) “ATA is interested in implementing the [above] approach in the Cooper Landing and Moose Pass areas in lieu of more regulation.”

Rebuttal: We in CL feel informal agreements are not binding in any way, are ill-definable and in the long run do not adequately establish a reliable framework for responsibility.

(6) We do not share the confidence the ATA has in itself per Mr. Zarnke’s e-mail correspondence: “We feel that this mutual voluntary approach is preferable to a regulatory approach. We also believe that compliance will be greater.” It seems an unusual admission that the ATA may have so little control over the trapping community that lawful regulations can be easily ignored. Although Mr Zarnke states “There is no formal document associated with our agreement here in Fairbanks.” And that “We would prefer to meet with your group only, without all of the agency personnel involved.”

We in Cooper Landing would feel more secure approaching our issues through the legal regulatory process. With no disrespect to the ATA suggestion for informal agreements, we wish to remain open and flexible within a legal framework. We don’t feel authorized to make an informal commitment that may evaporate when the framers of such an agreement move on. Our CL Proposal 180 is asking for “Public Use –Closed to Trapping” setback areas that are regulated, definable and enforceable. We hope to work together to establish fair and equitable boundaries for these areas within a regulatory framework.

Alaska Trappers Association Signage in Cooper Landing



The irony of posting an ATA sign *advising* trappers to respect other public land users at Quartz Creek Day Use Picnic Area and Boat Launch seems fairly obvious. This picnic area is a year round public destination multiuse area and perhaps not suitable for traps even if pets are leashed and children kept under control.





The same irony applies for Quartz Creek Bridge which borders the Quartz Creek Campgrounds and River Walkways also public and family destination multi-use areas where Closed to Salmon Fishing regulations are in effect.



Cooper Landing Trapping Issues – Time Line

1) **On-line Petition** ; started in **November 2012** by Ken Green as a response to dogs getting trapped - injured and killed incidents – around Cooper Landing.

Move On.Org Internet Petition on trapping and bear baiting regulations: **Demand Alaska legislative attention to the growing safety concerns of unregulated trapping and bear-baiting in residential areas and on multiple use public lands.** It was later delivered to The Alaska State House, The Alaska State Senate, and Governor Sean Parnell.

2) **Board of Game – Kenai Visitor’s Center; March 15, 2013.** Ken Green presented the above Petition and was **advised to start a local committee** to deal with the issue and submit a Proposal to BOG by following procedure.

3) **Safe Public Lands Coalition** (now the Committee for Safe Public Lands and Trails) established at Moose Pass Hall; **2 March, 2014.** This was started as advised by the BOG. Four members started the committee at the first meeting and the membership has since grown.

4) **Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly meeting; 07 January 2014.** Ken Green put together a presentation and submitted the petition to KPB as advised by Senator Cathy Geisel who thought we should begin our requests at the local level. **(The Bear Baiting Issue was dropped).**

5) **Kenai Lake Lodge meeting; 16 April 2014.** We held an informal meeting with members of our CL group and the BOG and FAG representatives – Ted Spraker observing and commenting as Chairman of the BOG and Larry Lewis observing and commenting for FAG.

6) **Safe Public Lands Coalition; Moose Pass April 2014.** We held another meeting to **finalize BOG Proposals** before the 1 May submission deadline. We made on-line submission for the BOG 2015 Proposal Book. There were two Proposals: 180 for Cooper Landing and 181 for Moose Pass/Seward.

7) ~~We~~ hosted a **General Public Meeting held** at the Cooper Landing Seniors Raven’s View commons room; **04 June 2014.** This was a well-attended public interest meeting with local residents and representatives of the Alaska Trappers Association – including ATA president Randy Zarake from Fairbanks, representatives from the Kenai Peninsula Borough, the Board of Game and Fish and Game. The outcome was that we publically agreed to work together with ATA to find solutions. Ken Green later met separately with two local trappers and discussed the issues informally debating and looking at maps where compromise could work. No one was in a position to offer anything but helpful points were made from both sides.

8) **Cooper Landing Planning Commission** meeting at CL Community Hall; **5 Nov. 2014.** Ken Green made a presentation with audience discussion to bring attention to the matter and encourage support. **(Committee for Safe Public Lands and Trails – is our CL group now)**

9) **Cooper Landing Community Club** meeting at CL Community Hall; **6 Nov. 2014.** KG made another presentation with discussion to bring attention to the matter and encourage support.

10) **Cooper Landing Chamber of Commerce Meeting; 2 February 2015.** KG talks with CL CC about our proposal and the goals of it to bring attention to the matter and encourage support.

11) **Opinion and support or no support collection:** An on-line survey on Attitudes towards Trapping Issues in CL; a poll for In Favor or Not In Favor of Proposal 180 responses. These actions occurred in Feb. - March, 2015. We collected and collated responses for the BOG.

12) **15 Feb. 2015.** KG had another meeting with a local ATA trapper who previously discussed matters but now demanded we withdraw Proposal 180 and all requests for regulations as a condition for discussion. The trapper walked out since Ken felt unable to withdraw our proposal.

13) **BOG Meeting 13-17 March 2015 Anchorage UAA**

BOARD OF GAME PROPOSAL 180 SUPPORT AS OF MARCH 12, 2015

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	SUPPORT	COMMITTEE
Alexie	John	Seward, AK			Don't Support
Atkinson	Barb	17601 Sterling Hwy CL 99572	907-595-1366	Support	
Atkinson	Tom	17601 Sterling Hwy CL 99572	907-595-1366	Support	
Barnett	Lori	Cooper Landing 99572		Support	
Barnett	Sean	Cooper Landing 99572		Support	
Bear	Robert	Bean Creek Rd CL 99572	907-595-1773	Support	
Bear	Evie	Bean Creek Rd CL 99572	907-595-1773	Support	
Bensler	Jim	19275 Sterling Hwy CL 99572	907-595-2055	Support	
Bensler	Connie	19275 Sterling Hwy CL 99572	907-595-2055	Support	
Bentley	Janet	POBox 738 CL 99572		Support	
Bowman	Kent	Bear Creek in Hope AK		Support	
Brownsberger	Dr Keith	Rusty's Way CL 99572	907-277-5497	Support	
Brownsberger	Sally	3036 Madison Way Anchorage 99508		Support	
Cadieux	Janette	Russian Gap Subdivision CL 99572	907-595-4685	Support	
Chamberlain	Heidi	POBox 503 CL 99572	907-595-3404	Support	
Committee	Girdwood Trails		230-3055	Support	
Cornett	Nina	37886 Snug Habor Rd CL 99572		Support	
Degernes	Chris	39860 Quartz Creek Rd CL 99572		Support	
Dickinson	Mitchel	18095 Langille Rd CL 99572	907-598-7748	Support	
Dickinson	Lisa	18095 Langille Rd CL 99572	907-599-0037	Support	
Doran	Lynn	162 Doran Lane Girdwood 99587	783-0771	Support by Survey	
Doroff	Keith	POBox 642 CL 99572		Support	
Elkins	Roger	Kenai Lake Estates Cl 99572	394-7259	Support by Survey	
Engbers	Ann	CL Seniors Center CL 99572	907-595-1810	Support	
Faryniarz	Kathy	Rusty's Way CL 99572		Support	
Ferry	Stephanie	38118 Snug Harbor Rd CL 99572	847-651-1515	Support	
Fish	Melissa	35372 Raven St. CL 99572		Support	
Fowler	Alma	POBox 782 CL 99572		Support	
Galbraith	Gary	POBox 827 CL 99572	598-1209	Support	
Galbraith	Yvette	POBox 866 CL 99572	907-230 -3055	Support	
Gieringer	Dr. Robert	Rusty's Way CL 99572		Support	
Gossard	Tom	18285 Lisa Ave CL 99572	907-595-3094	Support	
Gravenhorst	Marlyn	19001 Sherman Clayton Ct CL 99572	907-595-1710	Support	
Green	Ken	POBox 776 CL 99572	907-595-1643	Support	
Greenman	Jacqui	CL Seniors Center CL 99572	907-595-1810	Support	
Hammel	Dr Bill	Rusty's Way CL 99572		Support	
Harpe	Jennifer	POBox 653 CL 99572	907-229-3421	Support	
Harris	Jack	Cooper Landing 99572			Don't Support
Helgren	Kristen	POBox 853 CL 99572		Support	
Hensbury	Nancy L.	POBox 504 CL 99572		Support	
Hetrick	Roseann	POBox 7 Moose Pass AK 99631		Support	
Hoessle	Gabrielle	POBox 917 Girdwood AK 99587		Support	
Holsten	Sandra	Snug Harbor Rd CL 99572	907-595-2007	Support	
Holsten	Ed	POBox 790 CL 99572	907-595-2007	Support	
Holt	Marina	POBox 794 Kasilof AK 99610		Support	
Hsieh	Elise	Rusty's Way CL 99572		Support	
Kaiser	James			Why no Compromise?	
Knock	Tom	38079 Snug Harbor Rd CL 99572	907-595-1431	Support	
Koecher	Wayne	Cooper Landing 99572			Don't Support
Koppert	Joyce	POBox 664 CL 99572	907-595-1200	Support	
Lamberson	Alec	37926 Snug Harbor Rd CL 99572		Support by Survey	
Le Mieux	Nick	POBox 834 CL 99572	907-595-2356	Support	
Lenig	Amelia	19385 Rusty's Way CL 99572	907-595-2056	Support	
Lenig	David	19385 Rusty's Way CL 99572	907-595-2056	Support	
Lexmond	Theo	Russian Gap Subdivision CL 99572	907-595-4685	Support	
Mason	Julian	33968 Williams Rd CL 99572		Support	
McReynolds	Tom	Sterling Highway CL 99572	907-598-1106	Support	
Meredith	Shannon	35332 Raven St CL 99572	907-598-1115	Support	
Merritt	Gena	POBox 642 CL 99572		Support	
Michels	Dan	Bean Creek Rd CL 99572		Support	
Mitchell	Gary	POBox 764 CL 99572	907-595-1273		Don't Support
Mitchell	Glenda	POBox 973 CL 99572		Support	
Mitchell	Wayne	POBox 734 CL 99572		Support	
Morgan	Virginia	18285 Lisa Ave CL 99572	907-595-3094	Support	
Neis	Gerald J	POBox 595 CL 99572	907-595-3516	Support	
Neis	Kim	POBox 595 CL 99572	907-595-3516	Support	
Nelson	Rosana	POBox 748 CL 99572		Support	
Norris	Theresa	POBox 664 CL 99572	907-595-1200	Support	
Ohnemus	Mayme	POBox 754 CL 99572		Support	
Parsons	Jean M.	CL Seniors Center CL 99572		Support	
Parsons	Sean	PO Box 706 CL 99572	907-599-0084	Support	
Rankin	Arden	34343 E Quartz Creek Rd CL 99572	907-595-1718	Support	
Raveux	Greg	19277 Sterling Hwy CL 99572		Support	
Raveux	Linda	19277 Sterling Hwy CL 99572		Support	
Recken	Kathy	Rusty's Way CL 99572	907-595-1769	Support	
Rein	Allison	Girdwood resident uses CL Trails	907-244-9186	Support by Survey	
Route	Kristine	E.Quartz Crk Rd CL 99572	907-2022	Support	
Ruffridge	Justin	POBox 2692 Soldotna AK 99668		Support	

Online Survey Results for Attitudes Towards Trapping in Cooper Landing Multi-Use Areas

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1 Public multi-use areas are supported by all taxpayers	94	10	5
2 Trapping is a Right not a Privilege	38	13	58
3 Trappers are a minority in most established multiuse area	81	16	11
4 Most trappers behave responsibly and voluntarily adhere to the Trapper's Code of Ethics	43	34	32
5 Reasonable trapping regulations and restrictions may be necessary to control the behavior of trappers who do not adhere to the Trapper's Code of Ethics	94	3	11
6 It is the responsibility of dog owners to keep their pets on leashes or under control if someone is trapping legally in a community	63	21	25
7 Trapping in residential areas, along road sides and trails, may be legal but builds resentment for trapping with the public	95	5	9
8 Marking and signage for trap-lines and where trapping is in progress are good ideas in general	99	6	3
9 ID tags for traps should be required in the Cooper Landing Game Management Unit	90	5	14
10 A bar code type ID tag system so Game authorities could check traps from a distance without disturbing the sets would be a good idea	65	15	28
11 Designating easily definable and enforceable "Closed to Trapping" public use areas is a good idea	86	6	17
12 Some areas should be set aside for trapping and closed to non-trapping recreational users	26	22	60
13 Easily definable and obvious areas like paved roads, side roads, parking lots, pull-outs and well-established public use trails and camp sites should be protected with "Closed to Trapping" setbacks	91	1	17
14 "Closed to Trapping" setbacks would put trapping in a more amenable light with the general public	76	14	17
15 An adequate "Closed to Trapping" setback distance for areas in Cooper Landing would be:	>250 ft 61	100-250 ft 23	50-100 ft 19
16 Trapping for wildlife control by State or Federal authorities is sometimes necessary and should be recognized in all regulations as a special case	61	29	17
17 Given the choice "Public Use - Closed to Trapping" areas should be voluntary agreements with the Alaska Trappers Association or should be formally regulated by Wildlife authorities	Regulate 80	Neutral 9	Voluntary 19
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
18 "Public Use - Closed to Trapping" areas may be difficult to enforce so boundaries must be clear and easily definable	91	12	4
19 "Public Use - Closed to Trapping" should be designated for appropriately large enough areas (without being excessive) where non-trapping multi-use is well-established	85	7	16
20 Without enforceable penalties for unethically set or unmaintained and deserted traps, there is not adequate incentive for trappers to follow their published Code of Ethics	80	12	16
21 It is not adequate that there is legal protection for trappers and their equipment but NO reciprocal protection for damage to property of non-trappers such as injury or loss-of-life to pets or livestock	81	8	20
22 Banning larger lethal Conibear and Leg-hold traps and snares in select well-established multi-use areas around Cooper Landing is a good idea	85	4	20
23 In order to establish definable and equitable trapping "Public Use - Closed to Trapping" areas and setback regulations around Cooper Landing, it is a good idea to compromise and work with the Alaska Trapper's Association and follow the Alaska Board of Game proposal process	83	16	9
Total Number of Respondents as of March 12, 2015:	109		