

Community Development – Parks and Protected Areas
Division,

Program Policy
For
**Managing Fur Trapping in Alberta's Parks and
Protected Areas**

Approved: Original Signed Copy on File
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Introduction

Trapping is a traditional activity that reflects cultural and aboriginal lifestyles, which Alberta Community Development (CD) wishes to support. A number of Registered Fur Management Areas (RFMA) were included within parks and protected areas designated or expanded between 1995 and 2001. Commitments to trappers in these areas will be honoured. In addition to the *Wildlife Act* and its regulations, the *Provincial Parks Act* and its regulations and the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act*, fur trapping in Alberta's Parks and Protected Areas will also be managed pursuant to this policy. The intent of this policy is to ensure an appropriate balance is maintained between fur trapping and the public's desire for opportunities to view wildlife in a natural and safe setting and to make trapping operations as similar as possible between parks and protected areas and general Crown land.

Fur trapping in this policy means the trapping or hunting of fur-bearing animals carried out by a trapper. Trapper refers to a senior holder, as described in the Wildlife Regulation, who is in possession of a registered fur management licence pursuant to the *Wildlife Act* and its regulation as well as partners and other authorized trappers such as spouses or children authorized to trap on an RFMA.

General Provisions

1. If no RFMA exists at the time a park or protected area is established, no RFMA will be issued or expanded by Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) to cover lands within the park or protected area without the approval of the Minister responsible for Parks and Protected Areas.
2. Management plans for parks and protected areas where trapping is not already prohibited by legislation (wilderness areas, ecological reserves) or policy (most provincial parks and most provincial recreation areas) will address trapping as a permitted activity. They will establish conditions for ongoing trapping and they will address site-specific factors or any other matter deemed necessary that is not sufficiently covered by existing policy or legislation. For example, timing and location restrictions may be necessary to address park visitation or user conflicts.
3. Transferring a trapping licence requires approval from SRD. Prior to approving the transfer of a license that includes lands within a park or protected area, SRD will notify CD - Parks and Protected Areas Division where an RFMA that is either partially or fully within a park or protected area is being relinquished and provide CD with details of the status of that RFMA and the details of any proposal to assign a new senior holder. Adjustments to the boundary of the RFMA to consolidate and reduce the total number of RFMA's within a park or protected area may be considered, before a trapping license is transferred (before a new senior holder is approved) by SRD.

4. SRD will advise CD - Parks and Protected Areas Division if an RFMA affecting a park or protected area becomes vacant (i.e. for any reason not described in 3). Adjustments to the RFMA may be considered that would:
 - i. delete the portion of the RFMA within the park or protected area, or
 - ii. adjust the boundary of the RFMA to consolidate and reduce the number of RFMA's within the park or protected area,before the RFMA is reissued by SRD.
5. Partners are permitted to trap in the RFMA under a third party agreement with the senior holder. Like the senior holder, partners and other authorized trappers such as spouses or children are required to comply with all approvals, agreements and/or other conditions established for trapping within a park or protected area. Partners and other authorized trappers may be denied access to the park or protected area and enforcement action will be taken against them, as well as the senior holder, for non-compliance.

Class Specific Guidelines

Wilderness Areas:

6. Pursuant to the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act*, trapping is prohibited in wilderness areas.

Ecological Reserves:

7. Pursuant to the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act*, trapping is prohibited in ecological reserves.

Wildland Parks, Provincial Parks, Provincial Recreation Areas, Natural Areas & Heritage Rangelands:

8. Where an RFMA was in place prior to protected area designation, the trapper may continue to trap on lands within that part of a wildland park, provincial park, provincial recreation area, natural area or heritage rangeland that lies within their RFMA.

General Guidelines

Trapping:

- i. Trappers will restrict their use of traplines inside a park or protected area covered by this policy to trapping related activities only. No other activities are permitted (e.g., no recreational use such as family outings for camping or OHV excursions, and no adventure tourism operations such as guiding and outfitting).
- ii. In addition to complying with the *Wildlife Act* and its regulations, trapping must also be done in accordance with the *Provincial Parks Act*, its regulations and this policy.

- iii. Trappers will maintain clean and tidy cabin sites by preventing the accumulation of garbage, refuse and carcasses from their operations at cabin sites or any other location inside a park or protected area.

Access and Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Use:

- iv. Trappers are required to obtain a Letter of Authority (LOA) establishing conditions for their use of trails, access routes, off-highway vehicles (OHV) and snowmobiles in wildland parks, provincial parks, provincial recreation areas, and heritage rangelands. The LOA will be issued for a period of time that will not exceed the termination date a senior holder's five-year trapping licence. During this time, the terms and conditions may be reviewed and adjusted if necessary. Both the senior holder and the partner(s) and other authorized trappers such as spouses or children are to be named on the LOA.
- v. Pursuant to the Forest Land Use and Management Regulation under the *Forests Act*, trappers working in the Willmore Wilderness Park will be issued a LOA establishing conditions for their use of trails, access routes, OHV and snowmobiles in the Park. Use of OHV and snowmobiles will be restricted to frozen ground conditions. Both the senior holder and the partner(s) and other authorized trappers such as spouses or children are to be named on the LOA.
- vi. All trappers named on the LOA will be given a copy to be carried at all times and to be produced by a trapper upon the request of a representative of the Alberta Government.
- vii. Access routes used by trappers within parks and protected areas will also be documented as accurately as possible with CD staff.

Firearms:

- viii. Trappers will be issued a Firearms Discharge Permit under section 46 of the *Provincial Parks Act – General Regulation* to carry and use a firearm for the purpose of conducting trapping activities in wildland parks, provincial parks and provincial recreation areas. The permit allows trappers to carry identified firearms year round while working on their trapline in the park or recreation area. Separate permits will be issued to the senior holder and the partner(s) and other authorized trappers such as spouses or children.
- ix. Trappers who wish to hunt in a park or protected area where a Firearms Discharge Permit is required during hunting seasons for upland game birds, migratory birds or big game must acquire a separate Firearms Discharge Permits for that purpose.
- x. Pursuant to the *Willmore Wilderness Park Act* and the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act*, there is no requirement for a Firearms Discharge Permit in Willmore Wilderness Park, natural areas or heritage rangelands.

- xi. Because of public safety and resource management concerns, trappers are not permitted to discharge firearms within a wildland park, provincial park or provincial recreation area except during a trapping season specified under the *Wildlife Act*, and in accordance with the terms and conditions of a valid Firearms Discharge Permit.

Cabins:

- xii. Dispositions will be issued for all trappers' cabins located in wildland parks, provincial parks and provincial recreation areas as a Licence of Occupation (LOC) under Part 11 - Section 83 of the *Provincial Parks Act - Dispositions Regulation*. Parks and Protected Areas Division will work with trappers to accurately document the GPS location of cabins located inside parks and protected areas.
- xiii. RFMA licences are five-year licences renewed annually. A Cabin Disposition will be issued with an expiry date identical to that of an associated RFMA licence. These dispositions will stipulate that cancellation is automatic upon the transfer of the associated RFMA. As such, cabin dispositions will be cancelled and most likely reissued to the new senior holder when an RFMA is transferred.
- xiv. Cabin LOC dispositions will include standard and site specific conditions covering waste management and equipment storage. A list of standard conditions is attached to this policy.
- xv. Cabins must be maintained in a good state of repair and sound condition accomplished through routine maintenance to the satisfaction of the Conservation Officer in Charge.
- xvi. When it is determined that an existing cabin located in a provincial park or natural area needs replacement, locations inside the provincial park or natural area will not be considered unless all parties (CD, SRD and the senior holder) agree that there is no other reasonable alternative location. If the senior holder already has a cabin(s) in a provincial park or natural area, additional new cabins (main or line) will not be approved.
- xvii. The replacement of existing trappers' cabins and the development of new cabins may be considered in wildland parks, heritage rangelands, provincial recreation areas and Willmore Wilderness Park. The decision will be made based on need (i.e. size of site and distance from the trappers residence, degree of road access, proximity of other cabins etc). The location of replaced or new cabins should take into consideration public access concerns, visual concerns, and other potential conflicts. However, the preferred option is to place these cabins outside the park or protected area when the option exists. CD staff will work with trappers and SRD to identify and implement mutually

agreeable solutions. Trappers will require approval and a disposition before construction can commence. All evidence of old cabins that are to be replaced by new cabins must be removed by the senior holder to the satisfaction of the Conservation Officer in Charge.

- xviii. Trappers' cabins will conform to the following:
 - a. All structures are limited to one floor only,
 - b. main cabins will not exceed a total of 576 square feet (24 x24 or equivalent),
 - c. line cabins will not exceed 256 square feet (16 x 16 or equivalent),
 - d. no more than one storage shed per cabin site and storage sheds will not exceed 100 square feet (10 x 10 or equivalent), and
 - e. no servicing will be permitted (electricity, gas, water wells, etc.).

- xix. Periodic inspections of cabins will be performed by CD staff to ensure compliance with disposition conditions and this policy.