

Engaging with the trapping community

Proposing a disturbance standard for trapping structures on registered fur management licences on public lands

About registered fur management licence (RFML) trapping structures

Trapping has been a traditional pursuit in Alberta since the mid 1600s and continues today. Alberta's government is proposing updated standards through a new tool to make managing Crown land easier and reduce multiple user conflicts.

In Alberta, there are about 1,632 Registered Fur Management Areas (RFMAs). A senior holder can trap in an RFMA if they continue to renew their licence each year.

Under the Wildlife Regulation, both the senior holder and identified partners are considered registered fur management licence holders.

A trapping cabin is a shelter built within a trapline site to support trapping activities. A trapline site can also include other structures, such as a latrine, work shed, and storage shed.

Why the need for change?

In 1994, the department released a brochure called *Trapper Cabins: A Policy for Use* to explain how trappers can use public lands for their activities. Since then, the impacts and needs of trappers have changed, especially with the demands on the land by other recreational, commercial and industrial users and risks like wildfires. After 30 years, we have an opportunity to update the policy to better support trappers, reduce multiple user conflicts, and make sure the rules are clear and fair.

The goal of these updates is to make it easier for trappers to understand what is allowed for trapline sites and structures on public land while providing a straightforward approach to register these sites on the land. This registration information will help the department ensure that trapline site locations and associated structures are recognized during regulatory review processes for other commercial or industrial activities on the land. This registration will also identify these sites as authorized activities on the land and differentiate your trapline sites from any unauthorized activities or land uses.

To avoid attracting vandalism, trapline site location information will not be publicly shared, however, the location of a trapline site will be referenced to avoid conflicts with other land users. If a trapline site or structure isn't registered, the department will be unable to recognize it as an authorized activity associated to the RFML or consider it when completing other regulatory reviews. The registration of trapline sites within the RFMA will identify that specific trapping interest on the land allowing the department to focus on dealing with unauthorized occupation of public land.

What is the proposed change?

There are two main proposed changes:

- Updated standards for trapline site structures
- Simplified and updated registration process
- These updated standards are part of a disturbance standard, which provide land users permission to use public land for trapping, according to a set of guidelines. The disturbance standard will apply to vacant public land but does not apply to public land that is subject to a formal disposition or in an area set aside under the *Forest Reserves Act*.
- Disturbance standards can be put in place to define clear standards and conditions for an activity that aligns with the Alberta Crown Land Vision for all Albertans.
- When creating a disturbance standard, the Minister has the authority to set limits on how much impact developments can have on public land. Appropriate consultation must occur before any disturbance standards can be put in place.
- Disturbance standards require identification to track their use as they apply to the maximum limits of the standard.
- For situations where existing trapline sites are located on lands under disposition, the department will review these situations on a case-by-case basis and evaluate whether the site can be registered as the overall land use and rights of the disposition holder need to be considered.

Recognizing regulatory processes may be too detailed or cumbersome for some activities, the proposed registration process will simply collect the location of a trapline site as related to the RFML and documents the authorization of the trapline site within a government database.

Proposed updated standards for trapline site requirements

- A trapper can only use the trapline site structures for trapping activities.
- Trapline sites need to be 16 km (10 miles) apart from one another within a RFMA to a maximum of three trapline sites.
- An additional trapline site may be requested if you meet the 10 mile distance from other trapline sites and your RFMA is larger than 71,120 acres (28,000 hectares) (see Figure A).

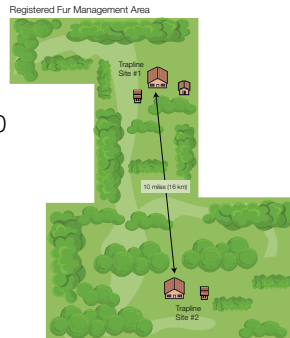


Figure A. Minimum distance allowed between trapline sites.

Proposed updated standards for structure requirements

- A trapline site may contain some or all of the following structures as per the following size limits:
 - Trapping cabin = 53.31 m² or 576 ft² (e.g., 24 ft x 24 ft)
 - Loft (optional)
 - Deck (optional) = 9.3 m² or 100 ft²
 - Work/skinning shed = 13.38 m² or 144 ft²
 - Storage shed = 200 ft² (e.g., 20 ft x 10 ft)
 - Latrine or outhouse = 1.67 m² or 18 ft²
- The trapping cabin must be removable and must not cause damage to public land.
- A trapping cabin must not use concrete, piling or other permanent foundations, and cannot have utilities like power lines, natural gas, or water lines installed.
- All trapline sites structures must be 30 metres from the bank of a body of water, including rivers, streams, watercourses and lakes (see Figure B).

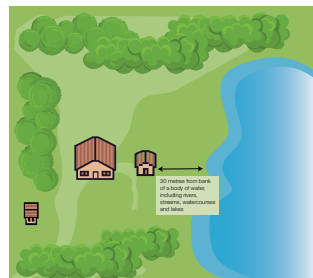


Figure B. Waterbody setback

Proposed updated standards for access and maintenance within the trapline

- A trapline holder is allowed to complete minimal clearing to existing trails using chainsaws or similar light equipment to clear obstructions.
- The clearing of existing trails must not be wider than 2.5 meters (7.38 ft).

- Clearing of existing trails should not damage or change the ground surface, nearby public or private land, or impact any bodies of water.

If the trapper wishes to do more clearing than what the disturbance standard allows to facilitate cabin replacements, then those requests would follow a formal authorization process.

Trapline site registration process

As an RFML holder, you will be able to register your trapline sites when you renew your Registered Fur Management Licence (RFML), or at your convenience. Once registered, your trapline site stays registered for as long as you hold the RFML, unless:

- The RFML changes ownership, which means the old registration is cancelled.
- The RFML is no longer active or in good standing.

RFML holders will complete a one-time registration form to identify the location of their trapline sites within the RFMA. For trapline sites that do not currently meet the disturbance standard, the department can discuss potential options with the RFML holder so that a registration may be issued.

To register a trapline site, the RFML holder will need to give the department some basic information like the RFML number and the legal land or GPS location. To view the draft registration form, visit www.alberta.ca/trapping-disturbance-standard-engagement.

If you already have an authorization for your trapline cabin from the department (for example a Temporary Field Activity (TFA) or a Miscellaneous Lease Permit (MLP)), new registrations will be generated by the department to replace these once the Disturbance Standard is approved. Once registrations have been issued, any prior TFAs or MLPs as replaced will be cancelled.

Should a RFML be transferred to a new holder and the trapline sites are transferred with the RFML, the new RFML holder must complete and submit a Registered Trapline Site (RTS) registration form for those sites. If the trapline sites and associated structures are not transferred with the RFML, they must be removed by the prior RFML holder, as soon as transfer of RFML is guaranteed. A removal strategy can be discussed with the department as needed.

Should you want to construct a new trapline site or replace an existing trapline site, a new form is required. Once registered, the RFML holder may develop the trapline site as per the disturbance standard. Any trapline sites replaced, will need to have any structures and debris removed by the RFML holder.