

March 22nd, 2026

Public Comment – Proposals 145–149

Submitted to the Alaska Board of Game

Dear Members of the Board,

My name is Carolyn Knapper and I am the Vice President of the Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee. I am writing to provide some clarification regarding statements that have circulated about the Cooper Landing Safe Trails effort and the individuals supporting Proposals 145–149. A significant amount of misinformation has been shared publicly, and I believe it is important for the Board to hear directly from community members involved in this work.

First, our group is not anti-trapping. Individuals involved respect trapping as a longstanding and legitimate part of Alaska’s heritage and wildlife management system. Personally, I held a trapping license in Canada and have taught trapping skills to Indigenous youth on their traditional lands. Other members of our group have similar experience; one trapped while growing up in Fairbanks. Our goal is not to eliminate trapping, but to improve safety and coexistence in heavily used recreation areas. Personally, when I set traps, I want to be certain if I set a trap that there is as little risk possible in catching non-target species.

Second, there have been claims that our group is raising money or financially benefiting from this effort. This is simply not true. The organization registered as a nonprofit to operate transparently, but we have received no funding or donations. All of our work has been self-funded through volunteer time and personal expenses such as fuel, printing, and outreach materials. The effort has been entirely volunteer-driven.

Third, some have criticized the community questionnaire we conducted. We fully recognize that any voluntary public questionnaire has limitations and is not a scientific survey. However, it still provided useful insight into how residents and visitors use local trails and how trapping influences recreation decisions, including reports of people avoiding certain areas due to concerns about traps and snares. The questionnaire was open to everyone, including trappers, and we did receive responses from both recreational users and individuals who support trapping.

Fourth, the discussion around keeping dogs on leashes has been framed inaccurately. While leash use is appropriate in many situations, it is not feasible for some recreation activities, including certain forms of skiing, skijoring, and other trail uses common in our area. More importantly, expecting leash compliance everywhere does not address the underlying concern that **there are currently no designated recreation corridors where trapping setbacks exist in the Cooper Landing area**. Personally, I would support a balanced approach that allows some areas to remain open to trapping while establishing setbacks in specific high-use recreation corridors.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the tone of some of the public discourse surrounding this issue. The President of our group, Lorraine Temple, has been the target of repeated personal attacks during this process. She was the only woman seated at the table during the Cooper Landing Advisory Committee meeting and has been subject to comments questioning her motives and her

connection to the community. In reality, she has lived in Cooper Landing for decades and has been working hard to represent the interests of many local residents, particularly dog owners and trail users. She cares for her dogs and takes care to keep them and others safe. Unfortunately, personal criticisms and inaccurate statements about our group have distracted from the actual policy discussion.

The members of the Cooper Landing Safe Trails effort are a mix of lifelong Alaskans and long-term residents. We care deeply about this community and about maintaining a respectful balance between traditional uses such as trapping and the growing recreational use of local trails.

I encourage the Board to consider the proposals on their merits and to recognize that many of the narratives circulating about our group do not accurately reflect our intentions or our work.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these comments.

Sincerely,

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