



Trapline Administration Process

Northern Ontario First Nations Environmental Conference

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Purpose

Present and discuss the basics regulations and requirements of trapping and harvesting; including:

- difference between regulated trapping and harvesting for sustenance,
- registering trap lines,
- licensing requirements,
- roles and responsibilities of head trappers and helpers, and
- Trapline transfers and repatriation of family traplines

Regulated Trapping Activity

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry uses a variety of management tools to regulate harvest and maintain healthy furbearer populations, including:

- Registered trapline areas
- Trapping licences
- Mandatory trapper education
- Trapping seasons
- Harvest quotas
- Mandatory harvest reporting
- Trapline buildings

Rights Based Trapping Activity

Aboriginal and Treaty rights give Indigenous individuals the right to participate in their traditional activities on their ancestral lands, including traditional harvesting activities.

This includes trapping where harvesting occurs for food, social and ceremonial purposes.

Considerations:

- Other users
- Private lands
- Safety requirements

Registered Trapline Areas

- Ontario has approximately 2,800 registered traplines.
- Every registered trapline is assigned a head trapper who is given the right to commercially harvest furbearing animals in that area.
- A head trapper has the right to choose and assign (or remove) helper trappers to assist with managing/harvesting on that trapline.
- Helper trappers are not assigned their own quota, but rather harvest from the head trapper's quota.
- Every trapper is required to have an Ontario trapping licence to harvest furs commercially. Licences must be renewed yearly.
- Every trapper is required to submit a Season End Harvest Report prior to June 10.

Licence Requirements

To obtain a licence to harvest furs for commercial use, a person must:

- Successfully complete the Fur Harvest, Fur Management Conservation Course or have held a trapping licence within the previous 5 years.
 - This course emphasizes safety and humane trapping, survival skills, pelt preparation, and sustainable trapline management.
- Youth Trapping Licences are available for those between 12 and 15 years of age.
 - Youth trappers must complete the Fur Harvest, Fur Management Conservation Course.
 - Youth trappers must trap under the direct supervision of a licenced mentor trapper.

A licence to trap furs for commercial use is NOT required for a Rights Bearing Indigenous persons to trap for sustenance, personal use, or traditional use.

Requirements under Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS)

Canada ratified the **Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS)** to support continued access to fur markets in Canada, the EU and Russia.

“The Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards is having a measurable impact on animal welfare through the use of certified trapping systems and education programs.”

- Ontario requires all trappers to:
 - Complete mandatory trapper education on humane trapping methods
 - Obtain a trapping licence
 - Use humane trapping methods

Trapping Harmonization Agreements

- Ontario has maintained a Trapping Harmonization Agreement (THA) with each of the three PTO's (Union of Ontario Indians, Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Grand Council Treaty #3) since 2005.
- The agreements “harmonize” the First Nation and MNRF systems for managing furbearing mammals and maintains Ontario's registered trapline system.
- Although some First Nation communities may not belong to a PTO, the trapline allocation procedure is still applicable to these community members.
- Under the THA, the PTO's are responsible for:
 - Issuing *trapping licences* to member fur harvesters
 - Collecting harvest data from member fur harvesters
 - Communicating aspects of the agreement and international humane trapping standards to trappers
 - Trapper education

Adding Trappers to Your Trapline

- The head trapper must have an active trapping licence for that trapping season.
- The head trapper must provide written request to the MNRF or your PTO indicating who they would like to have added to the trapline as a helper.
- Along with the written request, each helper must provide proof of having taken the Fur Harvest, Fur Management Conservation Course or have held a trapping licence within the previous 5 years.
- If it has been more than 5 years since the head trapper or the helper has renewed their licence, they will have to successfully complete the trappers education course and apply for a new licence.

Trapline Transfers

- If a head trapper wishes to give up his/her trapline, they must provide written notification to the MNRF or your PTO trapline administrator.
- It is recommended that the notification include any recommendations from the exiting head trapper with respect to their wishes for a replacement head trapper.
- If a registered trapline is vacant or if the head trapper has passed away, the family along with the Chief and Council should meet to discuss who the next head trapper should be.
- If required, the new head trapper would be given up to 6 months to obtain a trapping licence.

Trapline Repatriation

Trapline Harmonization Agreements identify the need and intent to repatriate traplines to Indigenous individuals where was a former family connection to the trapline area exists.

Process:

- Letters sent to Indigenous communities in January requesting information of areas where there may be a wish to repatriate a family trapline.
- As traplines become vacant, MNRF reviews any information relating to repatriation of traplines in that areas.
- Where connection is documented, the trapline is allocated to that individual.

Trapline Buildings

- In many cases, trapline buildings may be required to help sustainably manage furbearer populations on a registered trapline.
- Trap cabins will provide shelter while safely and efficiently allowing harvest from larger traplines where overnight accommodation is necessary.
- A head trapper would require work permit from the MNRF prior to building a new trapline building on a registered trapline.
- The work permit would enable an open dialogue between the trapper and the MNRF to ensure the trapper's needs are met while reducing impact to the landscape.

Summary

- Trapping licences are not required for sustenance, personal or ceremonial purposes.
- The Trapping Harmonization Agreement between Ontario, and the 3 Provincial Treaty Organizations provides a greater role for the PTO in administering trapper licensing, communications, and trapper training.
- Trapping licences are required by a person wishing to trap furbearing animals for the purpose of selling pelts to fur auction houses.
- The head trapper on a registered trapline has all the fur harvesting rights and obligations associated with that trapping area .
- All trappers trapping commercially are responsible to trap humanely and to submit season end harvest reports.

Discussion?

Thank You!