

The Facts on Walk-In Access (WIA) and Trapping

Walk-In Access (WIA) provides public access to private land and pays landowners by the acre to allow access from Sept. 1 to May 31. Most Walk-In Access land is also enrolled in a conservation program such as CRP, RIM Reserve or CREP or has natural cover, although small inclusions of cropland or hay land may be present. Through Walk-In Access, individuals have access to more than 30,000 acres across 53 Minnesota counties.

Is it legal for the general public to walk onto a WIA and engage in trapping?

No – Trapping by the general public without the landowner's permission would be considered trespassing.

Can the landowner or a person with the landowner's permission set traps on WIA parcels?

Yes – The landowner retains the right to engage in, or give permission to engage in trapping and many other limited activities that do not interfere with the ability of the general public to hunt on the property. WIA does not purchase exclusive rights from the landowner, only the right to allow public hunting.

Has the landowner retained this right of ownership, allowing trapping since the inception of WIA?

Yes – This has been allowed since 2011. Trapping has occurred on some WIAs since 2011 by the landowner or someone to whom they have provided permission.

Have any dogs been killed on WIAs by legally set traps since the program's inception?

No – There have not been any documented reports to show this.

Why would the WIA landowner allow trapping on their property?

Trapping is recognized as an ethical, vital and important management tool for the control of predators and furbearers. Trapping is a legitimate and legal recreational activity like hunting. Trapping and hunting are allowed on public lands.

Why does the DNR allow trapping on WIA parcels?

WIA purchases the privilege to provide public access only. It does not purchase the property rights from the landowner covering other activities that could take place on the parcels. As such, DNR does not have the authority to prohibit trapping authorized by the landowner. Property owners might decline participation if they are not allowed to remove nuisance animals or predators on their own property. Hunting and trapping are compatible activities on WIA lands as they are on 8 million acres of public lands.

Are there traps on all WIA parcels?

No – While the DNR does not have any firm statistics to show the exact number of WIA parcels with active trapping, trapping on WIA's is limited only to the landowner or person(s) authorized by the landowner. Because landowner permission is required and vehicles are not allowed, trapping is likely not occurring on most WIA parcels.

Are there any pro-active measures taking place to help ensure the safety of dogs on WIAs?

Yes – The DNR has asked (via letter) all landowners that are participants to voluntarily comply with the current trapping regulations governing public lands. Further, the two trapping associations that represent Minnesota trappers, the Minnesota Trappers Association and the Minnesota Forest Zone Trappers Association, have proactively issued a letter of support to the DNR to implement all current public land trapping regulations on the WIA parcels. These public land trapping regulations would provide the same hunting experience on a Walk-In Access parcel as on a Wildlife Management Area or Waterfowl Production Area

Where can I get more information on the Walk-In Access program?

For more information and detailed maps, visit www.mndnr.gov/walkin