

PROPOSAL 236

5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.

Require ADF&G to notify bear bait station registrants of other bait stations within a one-mile radius of desired bait station location as follows:

I recommend creating a system to allow hunters registering a bait station to be notified of how many bait stations are currently and previously (year prior) registered, within ¼ mile, ½ mile and one mile radius (proposed distances flexible) of the desired bait station location. The exact locations are not needed, nor is it legal to give those, however, similar to the statistics produced by ADF&G for advanced harvest data, the information would serve a summary purpose to inform hunters. This does not prevent a hunter from setting up a bait station knowing one or more already exist within 200 yards, it simply provides them with awareness and information for avoiding conflict and increasing safety. Similarly, if a hunter with a bait station has an encounter with someone that setup a bait station a few yards away, it is known that they were well aware of the proximity prior to setting it up.

This would require a database capable of producing these numbers instantly. The data exists in backend, server tables for prior and current year registered stands. When a GPS coordinate is given, it would simply be put in the system by ADF&G, and those coordinates would automatically calculate distances compared to other GPS coordinates in the system, and return the bait station numbers for the specified distances. Although it would require basic programming to produce the numbers, the data and capability exists to make bear baiting safer and with less conflict.

This could be taken a step further and also result in the requirement to provide GPS coordinates for all bait station sites, or simply omit those from the numbers due to the inability to pinpoint those locations.

** Alternate solutions include creating minimum distances between stands, but that would create others issues as well (establishing priority, fake stands, inability to have a friend or second station close, etc.).

DRAFT REGULATORY LANGUAGE:

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(b) (14) before a person establishes a bear baiting station and places bait at the baiting station that person shall, at the time of registration, provide to the department the specific location of the baiting station on a form provided by the department[.] **and will be provided with the number of registered bait stations within ¼, ½, and 1 mile radius from the current and prior year.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? A system needs developed to assist with spreading out bear bait stations. Currently, it is legal for two different individuals to register and setup a bait station within feet of each other. It is illegal to harvest a bear that is influenced by a bait station when they don't have permission to hunt that bait station, however, there is irony in the ability for someone to register a bait station close to the established bait station, then harvesting a bear that is influenced by the established bait station becoming legal due to the new station's proximity.

Allowing close proximity of bait stations results in a safety risk and hunter conflict. No system or effort has been attempted to try and prevent this safety risk or conflict. Most hunters are ethical and would not purposely setup a station on top of someone else, but that is why a system is needed, to help hunters that want to avoid conflict and safety issues, establish a bear bait site.

The unique problem here is bait stands take a lot of time and effort to setup, they are setup early in the spring before hunting actually takes place, and they are preferably setup in a place that isn't obvious or can easily be identified as a bear bait station. It is very easy for two different hunters to setup a bait stand within a hundred yards of each other, without ever knowing the other is there. Once the season starts, bears are moving, and both hunters are likely to visit their stands at the same time... this is when it's discovered they are hunting on top of each other. At this point in time, it's too late to move a stand since the season already started. Each hunter already spent a considerable amount of time and effort setting their stand up, bears are already active, and moving the stand might result in setting up on someone else. Hopefully both hunters are understandable and can work out a mutual understanding to ensure safety and the least amount of conflict, but that's a difficult situation when each may feel like the area and bears should be theirs to hunt without someone else on top of them and no way to separate.

PROPOSED BY: Adam Harris

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