

**NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION[571]**

**Notice of Intended Action**

**Proposing rulemaking related to trail cameras  
and providing an opportunity for public comment**

The Natural Resource Commission (Commission) hereby proposes to amend Chapter 51, “Game Management Areas,” Iowa Administrative Code.

*Legal Authority for Rulemaking*

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code sections 455A.5(6)“a” and 481A.6.

*State or Federal Law Implemented*

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code sections 456A.24(2)“a,” 481A.6 and 481A.39.

*Purpose and Summary*

The proposed rulemaking defines “trail camera” and prohibits the use of trail cameras on game management areas (GMAs), except when specifically authorized by permit or when used directly by the Department of Natural Resources (Department) or its designated agents. This prohibition is consistent with the ethical hunting principle of fair chase, ensuring that a hunter does not gain an improper or unfair technological advantage over game. Furthermore, the proliferation of trail cameras has generated numerous concerns and complaints from the public. This measure will protect the recreational experience of sportsmen and sportswomen and other visitors to these wild areas.

*Regulatory Analysis*

A Regulatory Analysis for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on April 29, 2026. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- May 19, 2026

*Fiscal Impact*

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa. There are no associated compliance costs since the proposed amendments only restrict the use of a particular piece of equipment. The only costs are related to education and enforcement, and those costs will be borne by the Department.

*Jobs Impact*

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

*Waivers*

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Commission for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 7—Chapter 2504.

*Public Comment*

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this proposed rulemaking, which must be received by the Department no later than 4:30 p.m. on July 28, 2026. Comments should be directed to:

Chris Ensminger  
Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
6200 Park Avenue, Suite 200  
Des Moines, Iowa 50321  
Phone: 515.250.6886  
Email: [chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov)

Free language assistance: If you speak a non-English language, the Department offers language assistance services free of charge. Contact the Department at [chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov).

Servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística: Si habla un idioma que no sea el inglés, los servicios de asistencia lingüística están disponibles de forma gratuita. Comuníquese con el Departamento al [chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov).

### *Public Hearing*

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

July 28, 2026	Suite 200
1 to 2 p.m.	6200 Park Avenue
	Des Moines, Iowa

Persons who wish to make oral comments at the public hearing may be asked to state their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of this proposed rulemaking.

Any persons who intend to attend the hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Department and advise of specific needs.

Free language assistance: If you need assistance in a language other than English, contact the Department at [chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov) or [civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov) or by telephone at 515.210.3408 at least seven days before the event.

Asistencia lingüística gratuita: Si necesita ayuda en un idioma que no sea inglés, comuníquese con el Departamento al [chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov) o [civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov) o por teléfono a 515.210.3408 al menos siete días antes del evento.

### *Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee*

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

ITEM 1. Adopt the following **new** definition of "Trail camera" in rule **571—51.1(481A)**:  
"Trail camera" or "game camera" means any remote motion-activated or infrared camera in which the shutter is activated by sound triggers, proximity sensation, radio transmitters, or a self-timer built into the trail or game camera.

ITEM 2. Amend rule 571—51.6(481A), catchwords, as follows:

#### **571—51.6(481A) Use of blinds, and decoys, and trail cameras on game management areas.**

ITEM 3. Adopt the following **new** subrule 51.6(5):  
**51.6(5) Trail cameras.** Trail cameras are prohibited on game management areas unless specifically authorized by permit or when used directly by the department or its designated agents.