
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

December 19, 2018

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource
Operations and Rural Development

Elephant Hill and Allie Lake Wildfire Areas Motorized Vehicle Restriction

Effective January 1, 2019, the areas known as the Elephant Hill and Allie Lake fire areas of the Thompson Rivers and 100 Mile House Natural Resource Districts are closed to use by motorized vehicles except on existing roads. The closure will be in effect until December 31, 2020, while restoration and recovery activities for the areas' sensitive ecosystems are implemented.

Why are these motorized vehicle restrictions being put in place?

- The closure is intended to support fire recovery, including range recovery and salvage retention strategies.
- The Elephant Hill and Allie Lake fires and fire suppression activities (e.g., creation of over 1,200 km of fire guards) have opened up areas that were previously difficult to access.
- It is anticipated that there will be an increase in off-road vehicle use pressure on sensitive ecosystems in the areas.
- Unauthorized off-road vehicle use can have many negative effects including soil compaction, erosion, increase in invasive plants, garbage accumulation and pollution from camper trailer holding tanks. This affects grassland health and wildlife habitat, as well as quality and availability of water for wildlife and livestock.

Why is this prohibition for two years?

- In 2019/2020, it is expected that recovery work including monitoring and access management planning will be initiated and implemented.
- The prohibition supports the existing range exclusions (in the Thompson Rivers and 100 Mile House Natural Resource Districts) for range tenure holders, which was enacted to allow the grasslands to recover.

What types of vehicles are included in this prohibition?

- Automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, and all types of off-road recreational vehicles including electric bikes, are not allowed to travel off of existing roads (e.g., not allowed on grasslands, meadows, wetlands, forested areas or fireguards).

What constitutes an "existing road"?

- Highways, main roads, Forest Service Roads and permit roads.
- Other roads that meet the criteria below. Note that rehabilitated or un-rehabilitated fire guards are closed to motorized use.

How can I determine if the road I want to ride on is an existing road?

- For the purposes of this closure an existing road is defined as having a paved, gravel or mineral soil surface.
- The road surface should be free of vegetation, accumulations of dead organic material (e.g. piles of dead leaves), long grass and so forth.
- A single track is not an “existing road”.

Where can I operate my highway-licensed vehicle?

- Highway-licensed vehicles can be operated on paved roads (e.g. highways), and on existing roads as defined above. However, they are not allowed to be operated off of existing roads.

What do I need to know about operating my off-road vehicle on the existing roads?

- Users of off-road vehicles (ORVs) must abide by the Off-Road Vehicle Act. See : <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/natural-resource-use/land-use/crown-land/crown-land-uses/off-road-vehicles>

Are there any exceptions to the current ORV prohibitions?

The order does not apply to:

- Authorized users performing activities associated with agreements awarded pursuant to provincial statute, such as existing tenures
- Snowmobiles operating on a minimum of 0.5 m of snow
- The following existing recreational trails:
 - Green Lake Snowmobile Trail (REC6246)
 - 70 Mile – Green Lake Trail (REC6897)
 - Interlakes Snowmobile Trail (REC6961)

Also note the following exceptions:

- Existing roads will remain open for public access into the closure area.
- Non-motorized uses are not restricted.
- The closure does not apply to private lands. However, travel of any kind on private land should only be done with permission of the landowner.

What if I am a contractor working for a tenure holder or a private landowner?

- Provided your activities are associated with an existing tenure on Crown land (within the fire boundary) and you are acting on their behalf, the closure would not apply to

you. We strongly encourage any motorized activities to minimize environmental impact where reasonable.

- The motorized closure does not apply to private land. If you are repairing or replacing fences on private land we encourage any motorized use to be on the private property side versus the Crown land side where reasonable.

Will the closure be enforced?

- Natural Resource Officers and the Secwépemc Territorial Patrol will be patrolling to ensure compliance with this prohibition.