



BC Conservation Officer Service

Access Management Compliance and Enforcement Program (AMCEP) 2017 Report

*Compiled by Conservation Officer Patricia Burley
May 15-November 15, 2017*



Sheep Mountain Access Management Area

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Maps.....	3
Contact Information	3
2017 Results	4
Chart and Summary from 2011-2015.....	7
Access Management Areas	8
Alexander Creek.....	8
Barnes Lake.....	10
Chauncey Todhunter.....	12
Corbin.....	14
East Flathead.....	16
Galton Range.....	18
Grave Prairie	19
Sheep Mountain.....	21
Upper Elk Valley-Fording.....	23
Upper Flathead	25
Upper Wigwam	26
Weigert Creek	28
Wigwam Flats.....	29
Education/Outreach	31
Other Work Projects	33
2018 Recommendations	34
Summary	34
Appendix 1: Pictures	36
Appendix 2: BCWS Stats.....	39

Introduction

In 2009 the East Kootenay Regional District (RDEK) electoral area A, in partnership with the BC Conservation Officer Service (BCCOS), initiated the Access Management Compliance and Enforcement Program (AMCEP). The AMCEP is dedicated to public education and enforcement of Access Management Areas (AMAs) found within the Regional District of East Kootenay's (RDEK) Electoral Area A. AMAs are designated and regulated under the BC Wildlife Act. The RDEK Electoral Area A geographically encompasses 463,917 hectares (not including the municipalities). The RDEK Electoral Area A currently holds 14 AMAs, 19 BC Recreation Sites and Trails and 4 Motor Vehicle Hunting Closed Areas (used to be known as VAHCs).

The following results illustrate the total effort spent by the AMCEP appointed Access Guardian in each AMA within the RDEK Electoral Area A from May 15th to November 15th 2017. This report also includes a summary of additional duties completed by the Access Guardian. Other duties comprised of; environmental protection, fish and wildlife enforcement, public safety, human wildlife conflict management, public presentations, stakeholder meetings, fund raising and AMA related administration.

Maps

To reduce this document size, AMA maps have not been included in this report. If required, maps of individual AMAs are available on the Ministry of Environment website:

www.env.gov.bc.ca/kootenay/eco/accessmaps.htm

As per the Letter of Agreement, the Access Guardian provided monthly AMCEP Reports to the RDEK for review. The monthly and final reports from May to November 2012-2015 and 2017 are now available for the public to view and read at the following website:

www.env.gov.bc.ca/kootenay/eco/accessmaps.htm

For further detailed information please refer to 2017 results.

Contact Information

Questions and concern can be forwarded to Conservation Officer Burley.

RAPP 1-877-952-7277

Desk 250-423-4264

Cell 250-423-1888

patricia.burley@gov.bc.ca

1621A 10th Avenue

P.O Box 2877, Fernie, BC, V0B1M0

2017 Results

Table 1: Overall results of the 2017 Access Program.

Total number of patrols and time spent within each AMA was recorded along with the number of persons contacted, number of charges, warnings and advice delivered.

Access Management Area (AMA) Patrols	Patrols Conducted	Hours on Site	Contacts Made	**Advice Provided	Access Warnings	Access Charges	Other Violations
Alexander Creek MU 4-23	19	40.75	84	84	2	1	4
Barnes Lake MU 4-23	1	2	9	9	0	0	0
Chauncey Todhunter MU 4-23	13	57.5	49	39	1	0	2
Corbin MU 4-23	9	13.75	35	35	0	0	1
East Flathead MU 4-01	11	61.5	49	26	0	0	2
Galton Range MU 4-02	13	34	36	21	0	0	0
Grave Prairie MU 4-23	20	42	121	103	0	0	1
Upper Elk Valley MU 4-23	1	8	8	8	0	0	0
Upper Flathead MU 4-01	8	26	33	33	0	1	0
Upper Wigwam MU 4-02	1	3	7	7	0	0	0
Weigert Creek MU 4-23	2	6.5	2	2	0	0	0
Wigwam Flats MU 4-02	33	96.5	89	75	3	2	2
Total:	131	391.5	522	442	6	4	12

Table 2: Overall outreach results provided to the public for the 2017 Access Program.

Outreach & Non-AMA Specific Activities	# of Events	Time spent (hrs)	Contacts Made	**Advice Provided	Access Warnings	Access Charges	Other Violations
General Patrol	18	29	33	31	2	1	2
Attend Complaint	3	4.5	0	1	1	0	0
School Talk	1	3	40	40	0	0	0
Municipality Talk	3	6	77	77	0	0	0
Community Clubs	4	9.5	83	83	0	0	0
Committee Groups	3	7.5	58	58	0	1	0
Other Outreach	15	43.75	15	10	1	0	0
Total:	47	103.25	306	300	4	2	2

Table 3: Estimated time spent travelling to various AMAs.

Travel time calculated by multiplying travel distance by the number of patrols conducted. (ex: Alexander Creek: Travel distance (1) x Patrols (6) = 6 hrs. of travel time). This is time over and above time spent in the AMA

AMA	Travel Distance	Patrols	Travel time (hrs)
Alexander Creek	1 hr	19	19
Barnes Lake	1.5 hrs	1	1.5
Chauncey Todhunter	1.3 hrs	13	16.9
Corbin	0.67 hrs	9	6.03
East Flathead	2 hrs	11	22
Galton Range	1 hr	13	13
Grave Prairie	0.75 hrs	20	15
Upper Elk Valley	1.3 hrs	1	1.3
Upper Flathead	1 hr	8	8
Upper Wigwam	1 hr	1	1
Weigert Creek	0.83 hrs	2	1.66
Wigwam Flats	0.42 hrs	33	13.86
Total:			119.25

Table 4: Summary of 2017 statistics.

Filtered numbers are for the months of Sept-Dec.

Statistics	Total	Filtered
Officer Time	494.75	238
Contacts	828	331
Access Charges	6	4
Other Violations	14	5
Warnings	10	2
Advice Provided	742	239

- It should be noted that Officer Presence is calculated as the time Officer(s) were physically present in an AMA and the outreach time provided for presentations, it does not account for travel to or from the areas.
- People who are provided advice are those defined as being encountered by a CO and discussing specific AMA facts and requirements for which the person in question was previously unaware. It should be noted that the AMCEP and general AMA facts are discussed with more than 80% of contacts.
- The above tables include the time spent on the preparation of the slide show presentation, Outdoor Access Guide, follow up paper work, media articles, brochures,

AMA enforcement investigation time and phone conversations with questions regarding AMA's.

- Some AMA's are patrolled more than others. The reason for this is that the COS responds to the areas with the most complaints and non-compliance. When time permits the Access Guardian tries to patrol areas that are remote and haven't been inspected for some time.
- In 2017 the AMCEP conducted **152** patrols within the Electoral Area "A" AMAs. The patrols were completed primarily by the Access Guardian. On occasion other COS staff from the East Kootenay Zone was involved with the patrols.
- A total of **614** hours were committed to the AMCEP.
- Officers spent **391.5** hours patrolling within the AMA boundaries alone. In addition to these patrols **119.25** hours were spent on travel. An additional **103.25** hours were spent providing education to the public and completing investigations. Patrols conducted within the AMA boundaries were completed by truck, ATV, snowmobile and foot.
- In 2017 a total of **29** AMA files were investigated by the East Kootenay COS in Electoral Area A. These violations involved vehicles operating within the boundaries of the AMAs.
- Other violations that are commonly found while in the AMA's are; loaded firearms, improper documentation (hunting/fishing licences), hunting out of season, fishing during closed time, illegal possession of wildlife/fish, hunting/fishing without a licence, illegal guiding, fishing with prohibited gear/bait, open liquor etc.

Chart and Summary from 2011-2015

Table 5: Summary of statistics of the AMCEP results from 2011 to 2015. The program was on hold for 2016.

	2011 (Aug - Oct)	2012	2013	2014	2015
Patrols Conducted	65	123	146	170	148
Number of Events	5	32	82	92	48
Hours on Site	258.06	524.5	549	518.5	630
Hours on Events (presentations + investigative time)	7	110.25	284.75	290.5	159
People Educated	61	951	1408	1451	578
Contacts Made	441	1308	1717	1544	1113
Access Warning Tickets	11	24	32	40	8
Access Violation Tickets	6	7	15	20	13
Other Violation Tickets	8	42	31	23	28
Travel Time (to/from AMA)	62.13	132.93	135.64	153.64	143.05

- Since the AMCEP started in August of 2011 the results of the program have been growing in success.
- The total number of Report All Polluters and Poachers (RAPP) complaints regarding AMA violations has increased since the introduction of the AMCEP in 2011. Most of the complaints reported to the Conservation Officer Service have resulted in convictions.
- More community groups have requested the Access Guardian to provide AMA presentations. In addition to the community group the Access Guardian also provides information to the general public and outdoor enthusiasts on a regular basis.

Access Management Areas

Alexander Creek



Table 6

Patrols	19
Hours on site	40.75
# of contacts	84
# advice provided	86
Access Charges	1
Access Warnings	2
Other Violations	4

- Alexander Creek AMA is one of the largest AMAs and has a vast network of roads predominantly within the northern portion. This AMA has the highest number of seasonal road closures. The enforcement of this AMA is challenging due to the size and network of roads leading from Alberta to BC. Most of the non-compliance within this AMA is due to the public entering the AMA with vehicles and damaging AMCEP property by cutting locks and chains attached to road closure gates.
- Alexander Creek AMA receives a high number of visitors from Alberta that frequently carry out quad trips (ATV and dirt bikes) from the Atlas staging area in the Crowsnest

Pass. The complaints in 2017 have decreased since the previous years. This was likely due to the 2017 Alberta and BC ORV bans instituted due to wildfire closures.

- Access into the Alexander Creek AMA through the Crowsnest Provincial Park located off of Hwy 3 near the Alberta border continues to be an issue. The issue with this access is that numerous people have been driving through the Provincial Park to the AMA. A significant amount of time was spent in this area and along Phillips Pass by the COS. A number of Violation and Warning tickets were issued to motorists by the Fernie COS. BC Parks unloaded large rocks to block access where motorists were driving into the closed area. It has been successful so far in keeping vehicles out.
- The Sparwood Fish and Wildlife Club held their annual bow shoot on June 17, 2017 in the Alexander Creek AMA. The COS and Access Guardian have attended this function since 2009.
- In 2015 Teck Coal posted maps of the AMA boundary at every main entrance.

Recommendations:

The Access Guardian will continue to patrol the area when it is most likely to have a high number of non-compliance. Late afternoons and weekends during favorable weather would be the most practical time to encounter motorized vehicles operating within the AMA. It would be beneficial to organize patrols along the Alberta/BC border.

The AMCEP must continue to network and provide education to the Alberta Quad Squad (Southern Alberta Rockies ATV club), Elk Valley Snowmobile/ATV Clubs and Cranbrook ATV Clubs. The AMCEP must continue to use surveillance equipment to provide the Access Guardian with valuable evidence used to prosecute violators.

Barnes Lake



Table 7

Patrols	1
Hours on site	2
# of contacts	9
# advice provided	9
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	0
Other Violations	0

- The Barnes Lake AMA is located within an alpine ecosystem. A multitude of alpine species can be found within this AMA. Lush vegetation including various wildflowers can be observed during the spring and summer months.
- The Barnes Lake AMA is situated in a remote area and can be access by ATVs. To access the AMA riders must take a 40 minute ride departing from the Corbin Staging Area 5 Km's south on the Flathead Forest Service road to a turn off to the north. From there riders will reach a high basin, from this point on the roads are closed to motorized use. From the closure it is a 30 minute hike to Barnes Lake. Barnes Lake offer some of the Kootenay's best fishing opportunities for all ages.

- Unfortunately ATV's are pushing their limits into the riparian ecosystem which results in more environmental damage. To deter motorized activities the Sparwood Fish and Wildlife Club has spent a considerable amount of volunteer time to ditch out the closed road. In time these ditches wear down making it easier for motorized vehicles to access the closed area.
- The Access Guardian and COS staff patrolled to Barnes Lake AMA in July. They encountered a group of 3 dirt bikers on their way out. They said they did not go to the lake, but their tracks later identified that they attempted to go into the closed wetland. Old tracks were found that did not indicate that much traffic was going into the lake. The AMA signs were all posted.

Recommendations:

A kiosk indicating the distance and time to walk into Barnes Lake could be posted at the entrance of the closed section. Also a Report All Poacher and Polluter (RAPP) sign would be suitable at this location as well. Although there is no cell service at this point, concerned citizen can file their reports at a later time. The Wildlife Branch is working on having a sign posted by the summer of 2018.

The COS would like the public's assistance with reporting abuse in this AMA, as it is a pristine mountain riparian area. Complaints forwarded to the RAPP line will aid the COS and Access Guardian with planning an enforcement strategy. Information provided by the public such as vehicle plate numbers and description of offending vehicles and operators allow the COS to pursue enforcement action. The COS and Access Guardian will be conducting weekend patrol within this AMA in 2018. The Access Guardian will also stage at the trailhead and provide information to trail users.

Chauncey Todhunter



Table 8

Patrols	13
Hours on site	57.5
# of contacts	49
# advice provided	39
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	1
Other Violations	2

- Chauncey Todhunter AMA is northeast of Elkford heading towards the Fording Mine. The AMA can easily be accessed by horseback, ATV, hiking or driving. This AMA is the busiest during the elk and sheep hunting season. A number of public complaints were reported of vehicles observed driving on closed roads within the AMA. Hunters that obey the restrictions by hiking or horseback riding into the area have voiced their frustration of observing people driving by them on the closed roads. It is very important to record and report the vehicle licence plate numbers in order to allow the COS to pursue charges.
- There are no entrances from Alberta into this AMA. It was found that most motorized traffic was from local BC residents. There were hunting camps that set up for weekly periods that were checked during the hunting season. The local Outdoor Access Guide was handed out at each camp.
- Teck Coal Inc. in collaboration with the AMCEP and the regional ecosystem biologist agreed to ditch the North Chauncey road located on Teck Coal's Fording mine property and the AMA. The ditching work was completed by Teck Coal Inc. in November of 2017.

Recommendations:

Numerous RAPP complaints regarding this AMA were forwarded to the COS. All complaints forwarded to COS that included plate numbers were actioned. It would be beneficial to remind Industry workers of the AMA boundaries and to educate workers on what information to gather for enforcement purposes. The Access Guardian will distribute AMA brochures to the five Elk Valley Teck mines in 2018.

Due to the close proximity of the AMA, the COS also conducts patrols of the Teck Coal Inc. Fording and Greenhills mine no hunting and trespass areas. The COS will also continue to patrol the AMA during the winter months as snowmobilers continue to abuse the AMA.

Corbin



Table 9

Patrols	9
Hours on site	13.75
# of contacts	35
# advice provided	35
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	0
Other Violations	1

- Michel Creek twists along the Corbin Road which makes it convenient for the COS to check anglers while also verifying compliance within the AMA. A number of fisheries tickets were written on Michel Creek for prohibited fishing gear (barbed hooks or bait). There are many anglers on this creek and some of them come from as far away as the USA, United Kingdom, and Europe.
- Many camps set up and park along Michel Creek on the opposite side of the AMA. The Access Guardian provided information regarding the AMA and handed out the Outdoor Activity Guide to the campers. Campers were reminded to report and motorized activities within the closure to the toll free 24 hour RAPP line.
- The Tent Mountain road located at the south end of the AMA is open to motorized use and is frequently used by ATVs traveling from Alberta into BC.

- In 2017 the Corbin AMA received little hunting traffic. Logging operations continue to operate within the AMA. Due to the high volume of industrial logging traffic it has been difficult to differentiate between unpermitted and permitted vehicle use within the AMA.

Recommendations:

Recreation camps with visible ATV's near Michel Creek will continue to be checked and educated.

The public is encouraged to report violations to help the COS as there are a number of gates that are left unlocked or open.

Logging and mine exploration has been and will continue to be active in the area and with this there will be more eyes and ears out there to witness and report violations.

East Flathead



Table 10

Patrols	11
Hours on site	61.5
# of contacts	49
# advice provided	26
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	0
Other Violations	2

- The East Flathead is one of the most remote AMA's to patrol from Fernie. It is a recreational haven for the outdoors enthusiasts. There are three different public access points into the East Flathead AMA; from Corbin, Morrissey and Ram/Cabin Rd.
- The East Flathead seems to have a steady flow of recreational users year round and becomes busier every year. There are open roads for snowmobilers and back country skiers to utilize during the winter and during the spring, summer and fall the traffic continues for camping, fishing, hiking and hunting.
- On August 1-2 the CO Inspector and regional biologist patrolled and posted new AMA signs at Proctor Lake, Upper Nettie, Lower Nettie, Sage Creek, Kishinena, Elder Creek and Starvation Creek.
- There are a number of BC Forest Recreation Sites within the AMA that are beautiful areas to camp in but the public is reminded that they are not entitled to leave a camp set at a Forest Recreation Site for more than two weeks. Many of these sites such as Proctor Lake have been abused with litter and vandalism.

- Middle Kootenay Pass is one of the most utilized illegal entrance routes that are accessed by Alberta residents into BC, and visa-versa. The CO Inspector patrolled to the drill site in August and there were no further tracks to the summit from the BC side. Alberta is shutting down the motorized activity at Castle Mountain which will help protect the BC/Alberta summit of middle pass that has been highly abused.
- Guide Outfitters, Assistant Guides, Trappers and local members of the communities in the Elk Valley frequent this area almost weekly. The COS will continue to patrol and educate along the south end of the East Flathead.

Recommendations:

A helicopter patrol would be beneficial on a sunny weekend in July or August if abuse is reported or seen by a CO.

A focused weekend project in the summer or fall in the East Flathead AMA will be conducted by the East Kootenay COS by ATV.

Approximately four gates require new locks and some of the signs will be replaced. Logging will continue into late 2018 in the burn areas and the logging companies have agreed to deactivate all new roads created within the AMA.

Galton Range



Table 11

Patrols	13
Hours on site	34
# of contacts	36
# advice provided	21
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	0
Other Violations	0

- November is the busiest month for hunters in the Galton Range AMA which borders Hwy 93 on the East side of the highway and South of the Elk River. This AMA includes twelve mountain drainages with access into six of them. The archery season ends in December and it is also a popular area for hunters as it is a migration route for deer. Mule deer (4pt) goes until November 10th and then an LEH sheep hunt is open until November 20th and the season for whitetail deer continues till the end of November.

Recommendations:

The Access Guardian put a chain and lock on the broken gate to Rabbit Lake/Upper Wigwam AMA in Phillips Pass but this will need to be fixed as it is only temporary.

Night patrols could be conducted in this area for the fall of 2018 as there were night hunting complaints that were reported in 2017.

Grave Prairie



Table 12

Patrols	20
Hours on site	42
# of contacts	121
# advice provided	103
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	0
Other Violations	1

- Grave Prairie patrolled numerous times every month throughout the year by the COS as it is a critical and extremely valuable winter range for wildlife. It continues to be the busiest AMA for recreationists year round (especially during the bow elk and deer seasons).
- The Elk River was also checked for anglers during the Grave Prairie patrols. During those checks violation tickets were written for people fishing without a licence and fishing with prohibited gear.
- The Sparwood Fish and Wildlife Club continue to manage the Grave Lake Campground. This campground is a family oriented and has been cleaned up over the years. This AMA has improved with compliance as the camping is more appealing and AMA enforcement has been strong in the last 6 years.
- In the past signs in the Grave Prairie AMA have been removed and damaged. In 2017 no damage to the signs has been reported or observed.

Recommendations:

The Access Guardian will continue to meet with the Fernie, Sparwood and Elkford High Schools every year before the May Long weekend to educate on AMA's and the COS. The Access

Guardian will conduct patrols and monitor the campers and motorized activity during the May Long Weekend.

The Access Guardian and Teck Coal Inc. will continue to improve the AMA's compliance.

There was a higher than normal number of violations during the hunting season within this area that the COS responded to. The COS and the Access Guardian will continue to patrols in this area on a regular basis from September to November.

Sheep Mountain



Table 13

Patrols	18
Hours on site	27
# of contacts	33
# advice provided	33
Access Charges	1
Access Warnings	2
Other Violations	2

- The Sheep Mountain AMA does not fall within Electoral Area “A”, but was approved to be patrolled as part of the AMCEP.
- Sheep Mountain AMA is primarily patrolled during the late October and November deer hunting season.
- Sheep Mountain has a large area of sensitive grasslands that elk and deer rely on for year round feed. These grasslands do not recover as easily as other rugged habitats. Motorized vehicle tracks are seen driving off the main open roads and onto the grasslands. There are signs posted on the closed roads which have not been damaged.
- There is a dirt bike park on the Northeast corner of the AMA that still needs to be monitored. The Access Guardian patrolled the area and provided AMA related information to the families recreating in this dirt bike course.

Recommendations:

Due to noncompliance, CO’s should focus on the South end of Sheep Mountain.

The boundaries should be amended to exclude the dirt bike course located in the Northeast corner of the AMA. This regulatory recommendation should be forwarded to the Ecosystem biologist by the end of 2018.

Upper Elk Valley-Fording



Table 14

Patrols	1
Hours on site	8
# of contacts	8
# advice provided	8
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	0
Other Violations	0

- The Upper Elk Valley-Fording AMA is a heavily used AMA throughout the summer and early fall months. It receives motorized traffic from the local communities and from throughout Canada and the United States.
- The Upper Elk Valley Road starts in Elkford ending at the Elk Lakes Provincial Park. Height of the Rockies Provincial Park also borders the AMA to the West. Hikers, campers, bikers, anglers, hunter and ATV's all thrive to enjoy the beautiful views of the Upper Elk Valley.
- The Big Weary Ridge Trail is open on the East side from July 1-Aug 31. The Elkford ATV Club has been maintaining the trail and removing garbage. Members of the Elkford ATV club are knowledgeable of the AMA's within the Elk Valley. The Elkford ATV club has volunteered to provide AMA awareness to other ATV users using the online BC/ATV website.

- The Access Guardian meets with the Elkford ATV Club yearly. On June 27, 2017 the Access Guardian and the regional ecosystem biologist assisted the Elkford ATV Club to maintain the Big Weary trail.
- The Weary Creek Provincial recreation site and the Aldridge Creek Provincial recreation trail are both closed to motorized access and are maintained by the Hornaday Wilderness Society. The Hornaday Wilderness Society will continue to maintain the trails for horseback and hiking use.

Recommendations:

This AMA does not receive a high volume of complaints via the RAPP line. Although complaints are low patrols should focus on the fall season.

It has been reported that younger ATV operators have been damaging portions of the Elk River Forest Service Road. In order to legally ATV on a Forest Service Road operators must be 16 years and older, wear an approved helmet, have registration, purchase \$200,000 third party liability insurance and possess a valid driver's licence. Conservation Officers patrolled the Elk River Forest Service Road and provided education regarding current ORV regulations and safety tips.

Upper Flathead



Table 15

Patrols	8
Hours on site	26
# of contacts	33
# advice provided	33
Access Charges	1
Access Warnings	0
Other Violations	0

- This AMA is remote and takes a full day to gain access by vehicle.
- In 2017 the COS and Access Guardian conducted 8 patrols of this area.
- This AMA is open for snowmobiling in the winter.
- The Access Guardian and COS patrolled from the Shoefly Road to the gas line in the Upper Flathead AMA where they observed vehicle usage within the closure and litter.

Recommendations:

Conducting patrols during the hunting season would allow officers to educate hunters regarding the Upper Flathead AMA. ATV patrols conducted from the North of the AMA would allow for easier access to the Shoefly Road. In 2018 the Access Guardian will increase patrols within the Upper Flathead AMA and will attempt to access and patrol the Barnes Meadow area.

Upper Wigwam



Table 16

Patrols	1
Hours on site	3
# of contacts	7
# advice provided	7
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	0
Other Violations	0

- Anglers from around the world enjoy fishing the Wigwam River. It provides world class bull trout angling. Currently the Wigwam has no bull trout retention and is a classified river. It has been reported to the COS that some anglers are retaining bull trout and using prohibited methods to catch fish.
- The Ram Creek road is open to motorized vehicles but allows access to many closed roads and trails. This AMA has very steep terrain leading to the Wigwam River. To access the river most anglers hike the steep terrain. In some cases anglers that are not willing to hike will drive around gates to access the Wigwam River.
- The locked gate over the Wigwam River, near the mouth of Ram Creek and the gate on the East Side show signs of vehicles driving around and in to the closure.
- The lock on the gate situated at the Rabbit Creek road has been purposely broken multiple times allowing access in to the closure. The locks frequently are vandalized during the hunting season. Vehicles are accessing the Rabbit Creek gate through Phillips Pass from the Galton AMA.

- In 2017 the Access Guardian did not receive many complaints from this AMA. The Access Guardian conducted a one day ATV patrol on the East and West side of the AMA. Multiple anglers were inspected with no contraventions found.

Recommendations:

More focus on educating anglers regarding the AMA boundaries should be done in 2018.

All gates with locks within this AMA must be inspected regularly.

Patrols within this AMA should be completed during peak angling periods. Anglers tend to favor this area during the hotter periods of the year.

Two Forest Recreation Site are located adjacent the Wigwam River and is a suitable location to educate the public.

Weigert Creek

Table 17

Patrols	2
Hours on site	6.5
# of contacts	2
# advice provided	2
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	0
Other Violations	0

- Weigert Creek AMA is utilized by horseback riders, hikers, hunters and 4X4 recreationists.
- Only the lower half of the AMA can be accessed by truck, the other two trails are accessed by ATV or small trackers. Access to this AMA can also be accessed from Elkford. It is hard to ascertain if motorists are illegally in the AMA without patrolling to the southwest portion of the AMA.
- In 2017 ATV Club members helped post new AMA signs at the Weigert Creek on the south side of the AMA. These signs get ripped down every year however compliance was high this year due to the wildfire/ORV ban.
- There are dedicated members of the public that frequently use this AMA and will report any violations they see occurring to the COS or RAPP.
- Snowmobiles are exempt in the AMA during the winter.

Recommendations:

A new Weigert Creek AMA map is needed at the entrance onto the main road from Hwy 43.

Wigwam Flats



Table 18

Patrols	33
Hours on site	96.5
# of contacts	89
# advice provided	75
Access Charges	2
Access Warnings	3
Other Violations	2

- Wigwam Flats has breathtaking views of the China Wall on the South end of the AMA. Mount Broadwood on the North end is a caver's paradise. Wigwam Flats is probably one of BC's most valuable winter ranges and has almost every species of wildlife that you can view in one given area. The Wigwam River offers amazing fishing opportunities to the fly fisherman. Silver Springs are three turquoise lakes that connect to one another which offer a beautiful 15-30 minute hike. Unfortunately, Silver Springs has turned into a party site for people who like to leave their garbage behind for animals and other people to pick up.
- Wigwam Flats is a sensitive area for wildlife and its habitat. Invasive plants have taken over in some of the areas and are hard to control. Invasive Plant specialists have advised that motor vehicles have spread the invasive plants to other parts of this AMA.

- This area has also become more popular for the mountain bike community. Although mountain bikers are allowed in this area when motor vehicles are not; it is recommended that they stay on the main trails as mountain bike tires too can spread invasive plants. It is illegal to harass wildlife with a motor vehicle and for dogs to chase wildlife. It is recommended for dogs to be on leash in this area.
- The Fernie Rod and Gun Club have spent many volunteer hours controlling invasive species within this AMA by hand picking the invasive plants.
- The Wildlife Branch had the area sprayed for invasive plant species (hawk weed, st johns wart) in May and June.
- Trail cameras on the closed road off of the Wigwam Flats were posted for a couple weeks. Six plate numbers were captured. Two warning tickets and two violation tickets were issued. Three of the offenders were from Fernie.
- In 2017 the gates off the Ram Creek Road, Drinkwater and Rocky Ridge have highly reduced motorized use within the AMA. Motorists are using the pipeline to gain access to the AMA.
- When the gates are closed hunters and anglers use alternative methods such as mountain bikes to access roads beyond the gates.

Recommendations:

The Access Guardian will continue to conduct day patrols during any time of the week in 2017. It would be best to do most ATV patrols during the open time of June 15-July15 where people go off the main open roads; users such as ATV users, kayakers, anglers, campers etc.

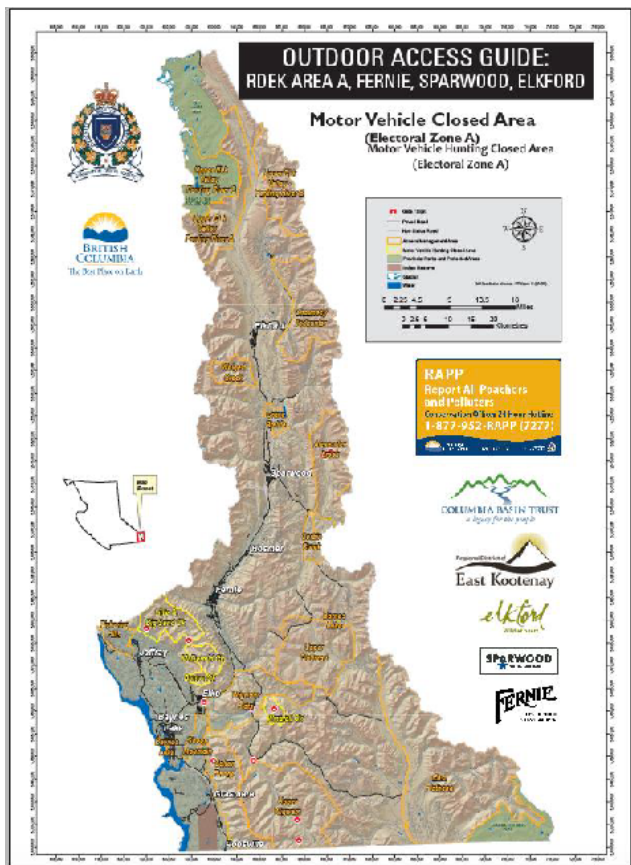
The maps at the entrances of the seasonal open roads eventually need to be updated. They are fading and peeling off. The message seemed to have spread throughout the area for the closed area between Rocky Ridge Road and the Wigwam Road.

Education/Outreach

In the spring of 2017 the Access Guardian attended Municipal Mayor/Council and RDEK meetings for a review of the program and presented a short power point presentation showing the charts and pictures of the AMA's. Education and outreach is always a top priority within the program. One of the main educational tools that The Access Guardian uses while in the field is the Outdoor Access Guide (OAG). The OAG has the support from the Municipalities, Industry and the public. 2000 copies of the OAG were printed in time for the 2017 hunting season and were paid for by the Wildlife Branch and BC Recreation Sites and Trails. The free guide can be picked up at the Cranbrook Ministry of Environment Office, AB Quad Squad Office, Elko Gas Station, Elk Valley Chamber/Tourism Offices, Service BC in Sparwood and Fernie, Grasmere and Jaffray. Since it was created in 2013 the Outdoor Access Guide has been very useful for hunters and other recreational users.

- On May 2/17 The Access Guardian, CO Inspector, Ecosystem Biologist and zone Conservation Officers took part in an East Kootenay/Columbia Zone AMA meeting. It was a good opportunity for the Access Guardian to hear the similar issues that other Conservation Officers have encountered while on patrol and responding to AMA complaints. Signage still seems to be the number one issue within AMA's. The signs get ripped down and staff does not have time to post new ones. During 2017 the Ecosystem Biologist had new kiosks built in almost every AMA where new large AMA maps will be posted on for 2018. The COS and local recreation club members will help post AMA signage.
- Another way to provide education to the public was to have face to face outreach presentations. The Access Guardian conducted slide show presentations on the AMA's to a number of community groups. The following is a list of the presentations she took part in: Fernie Rod and Gun Club, Sparwood High schools, , Fernie Trails Alliance, Fernie, Elkford and Sparwood Mayor and Council Members, Elkford ATV Club, Sparwood Fish and Game Club, Elkford Rod and Gun Club and Cranbrook ATV Club. During these presentations The Access Guardian had the opportunity to answer questions and meet a number of people that wanted to discuss their AMA concerns.
- An Iphone Application called PDF Maps is available to the public and can be used with the Access Management Maps from the BC Government online site. This smart phone application is user friendly but is no longer free. The Access Guardian uses the application when located in an AMA. A blue indicator shows if you are within the AMA and no cell service is needed. Open and closed roads, along with the different AMA boundaries are all incorporated into the program. All COS in the East Kootenay's have these maps on their Iphones. The public can find instructions on how to download the maps at: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/kootenay/eco/access.htm>
The public can contact The Access Guardian if they are having trouble downloading the maps.

- The Access Guardian worked with the BC Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Club based out of the East Kootenay's regarding fundraising efforts towards the 2018 issue of the OAG. The club presented to the RDEK electoral areas and the Municipalities of Fernie, Sparwood, Elkford and Cranbrook asking for funding towards the new OAG magazine. The Access Guardian and East Kootenay Sergeant took part in four presentations to help answer any questions council or directors had about the magazine. The Access Guardian and East Kootenay Sergeant took part in four presentations to help answer any questions council or directors had about the magazine. The club has spent countless volunteer hours working on this project and it is appreciated that they are taking the leadership on developing the new OAG edition. They want to add the Cranbrook area AMA's (the trench) into the magazine and update the maps for better clarity. The presentations were well received and the funding goal was almost met. The Access Guardian will help canvass for the remaining money to reach their goal of \$10,000. It is anticipated that the new magazine will be ready for the fall of 2018.



Other Work Projects

In addition to the Access Guardian's regular duties and responsibilities, there are a number of focused enforcement projects that the COS organize and conduct every year. The following is a breakdown of the different work projects that The Access Guardian took part in 2017.

- As of the fall of 2015 the Conservation Officer Service was given the new Off Road Vehicle Act (ORVA) to educate and enforce. During the early winter of 2017 the East Kootenay COS patrolled crown land, Forest Service Roads and snowmobile staging areas to conduct compliance checks. On one Saturday the Fernie COS issued 32 tickets to snowmobilers for not having their snow machines registered and not having a plate displayed (\$173-\$230). Corbin, Wigwam Flats, East Flathead and Galton AMA's are the most utilized AMA's for illegal snowmobile use. Other AMA's have exemptions for snowmobile use.
- The Access Guardian and COS took part in the Fernie Snowmobile Associations (FSA) Avalanche Awareness Days in March. Search and Rescue and Avalanche Canada also took part in the event to educate the public on avalanche safety. The Access Guardian has provided AMA information to the club and will continue the communication on what the requirements are while snowmobiling in an AMA and what they need for the ORVA and regulations.
- In March The Access Guardian instructed and certified six RCMP members from the Cranbrook and Elk Valley Detachments on Avalanche Skill Training Level 1 (AST1). The Access Guardian is an AST1 Instructor within the COS. All COS, Forestry staff and RCMP are required to have this training in order to go on snowmobile patrols in the mountains.
- Currently BC's waters are free of aquatic invasive species and we want to keep it that way. Inspection stations across BC have been strategically placed to stop motorist with vessels to inspect, decontaminate and educate under the Wildlife Act and Controlled Alien Species Regulation 94/2009. The inspection stations are open from April-November. COS responded to calls of motorist who failed to stop for the inspection stations. Motto; "Clean, Drain and Dry".
- The Access Guardian, CO Gordon and Inspector Caravetta marched in the Fernie Remembrance Day Parade and Ceremony on November 11th.

2018 Recommendations

- AMA outreach and education will be ongoing throughout 2018. The Access Guardian will book power point presentations with the Elkford, Sparwood and Fernie Secondary Schools before the May long weekend.
- Trail cameras and drones have proven to be a useful tool to catch non-compliance within the AMA's. The program has a total of three trail cameras that The Access Guardian utilizes every year. She will continue to post the cameras in hidden areas where people will least expect them to be. The drone will be a new tool to be utilized in the mountain passes which will ultimately save the COS some travel time. Fernie has one of 5 Provincial drone operators; CO Gordon.

Summary

2017 was one of the hottest and driest summers in BC's history. For 3 months forest fires placed the Province of BC in a State of Emergency. The Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) Southeast Fire Centre implemented prohibitions throughout the East Kootenay region from July 8th to September 22nd. Starting in July BCWS initiated campfire bans, ORV restrictions in early August followed by backcountry restrictions on September 1st. The East Kootenay COS worked long hours day and night to enforce these prohibitions. Due to the higher priority BC wildfire duties the Access Guardian did not meet the AMCEP goal of 800 hours. This was not a typical year for recreationists and COS. This is the second time in 33 years the East Kootenay/Elk Valley back country was closed due to wildfire hazards.

A new concern that the COS will be dealing with from now on is the use of pedal assisted mountain bikes. The pedal assisted bikes have an electric or gas motor that can be turned on and off on a mountain bike. It has been determined that it is illegal for the pedal assisted bikes to be in a closed non-motorized area. The legislation under the Wildlife Act states that it is illegal to use or operate a motorized vehicle in a prohibited area. The word use is what makes the bike illegal. If the bike has a motor attached to it whether or not it is in use it is not permitted within motorized vehicle closures.

In 2017 the East Kootenay COS acquired a drone. Currently the East Kootenay COS utilizes the drone for observing anglers in closed areas, problem wildlife and other wildlife enforcement duties. In the upcoming season the Access Guardian will work with the local Fernie CO drone operator to test the use of a drone to conduct surveillance within AMA's.

The Access Management Compliance and Enforcement Program (AMCEP) is the only program of its kind in all of British Columbia. It is a successful example of what the COS in partnership with regional districts and community members can do to ensure British Columbian's resources are kept sustainable for future generations. The general public has well received the AMCEP

and expressed positive feedback. Regular meetings held with stakeholders, municipalities, and recreationists prove to be of high value and provided meaningful insight and direction to the AMCEP. The East Kootenay region offers its inhabitants and visitors a vast opportunity of recreational experiences while submerged in the beauty of the Canadian Rockies. The Access Guardian will continue to work with the public and user groups to ensure that these cherished opportunities are available for future users.

Appendix 1: Pictures



A typical day in the Elk Valley 2017



The Lodgepole Forest Service Road was closed due to fire danger. Hunters/campers had to be evacuated from the Flathead on September 2, 2017



Upper Wigwam River, Angler patrol

Appendix 2: BCWS Stats

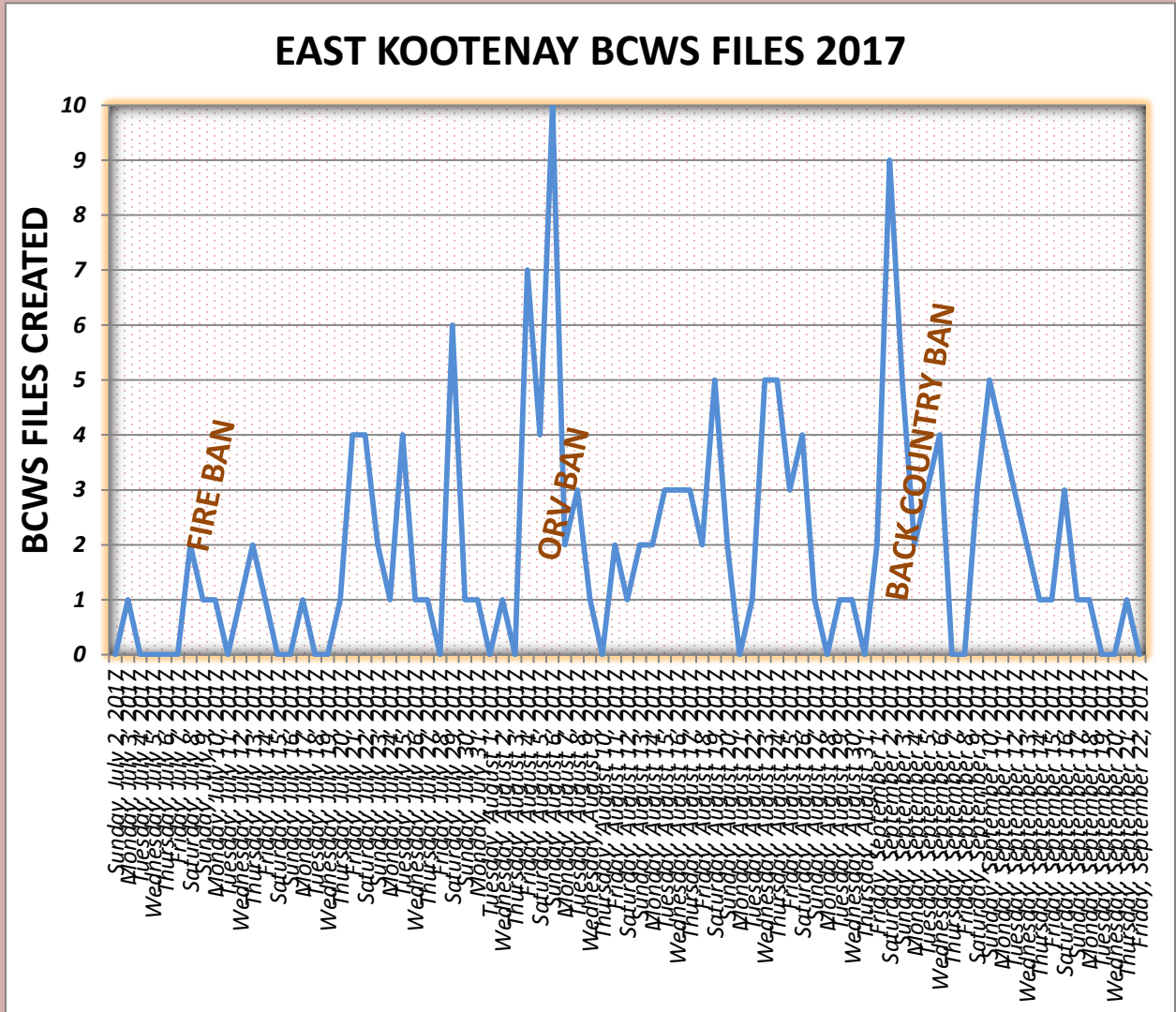


Table of Fire Enforcement Patrols

Enforcement Action	BWCS Calls Received and Actioned
Unfounded	66
Unattended	49
Unsolved	25
Warning	12
Violation Ticket	6
Other	3

From July 8th through to September 22nd 2017 the East Kootenay BC Conservation Officer Service (COS) enforced the BC Wildfire Service Southeast Fire Centre Cranbrook Zone fire prohibitions. The East Kootenay COS dedicated 2 officers per evening. Shifts generally started at 18:00 hours through to 23:00 hours and/or 01:00 hours depending on workload and calls forwarded. During this period of time the East Kootenay COS generated 161 fire related enforcement files and completed 2819 fire related compliance verifications. Of the total of 161 files 18 files lead to enforcement action, 6 wildfire act charges were laid and 12 warnings issued, 25 unsolved cases, 66 unfounded and 49 unattended. The majority of the unfound files were legal propane fires called in by concerned citizens. The unattended files were due to higher priorities calls, time delays and extensive response times.