



BC Conservation Officer Service

Access Management Compliance and Enforcement Program (AMCEP) 2019 Report

*Compiled by Conservation Officer Patricia Burley
May 15-November 15, 2019*



East Flathead Access Management Area

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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) located 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 Ha (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 2019. 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 and Climate Change Strategy 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 final reports from May to November 2012-2015, 2017 and 2018 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 2018 results.

Contact Information

Questions and concerns can be forwarded to Conservation Officer Burley.

RAPP 1-877-952-7277

Desk 250-423-4264

patricia.burley@gov.bc.ca

1621A 10th Avenue

P.O Box 2877, Fernie, BC, V0B1M0

2019 Results

Table 1: Overall results of the 2019 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	*Officer Presence			Officer Action			
	Patrols Conducted	Hours on Site	Contacts Made	Access Charges	Access Warnings	Advice Provided	Other Violations
Alexander Creek	18	75.5	64	1	1	8	6
Barnes Lake	2	3.5	10	0	0	4	0
Chauncey Todhunter	7	21.75	34	0	0	14	1
Corbin	8	25.5	42	0	0	4	0
East Flathead	12	90.5	32	0	0	4	5
Galton Range	9	17.5	21	0	0	15	0
Grave Prairie	18	39	45	0	0	13	3
Sheep	20	29.2	26	0	0	9	2
Upper Elk Valley	4	13	11	0	1	10	0
Upper Flathead	7	22	2	0	0	0	0
Upper Wigwam	2	8.5	4	0	0	2	0
Weigert Creek	5	4.75	2	0	0	1	0
Wigwam Flats	20	53.5	114	1	2	8	11
	132	404.2	407	2	4	92	28

Table 2: Overall outreach results provided to the public for the 2019 Access Program.

Outreach & Activities Outside AMA Boundaries	# of Events	Time spent (hrs)	Contacts Made	Access Charges	Access Warnings	Advice Provided	Other Violations
Committee Groups	4	18.5	83	0	0	65	0
Community Clubs	2	6	35	0	0	60	0
Municipality Talk	3	9	93	0	0	0	0
School Talk	1	3	250	0	0	250	0
Program Development	23	57.5	70	0	0	0	0
Meeting Prep	1	4	0	0	0	0	0
Phone & Curb-side Education	5	13.5	14	0	0	13	0
Investigation not in AMA	20	91.5	27	0	12	9	22
Seasonal Motor Vehicle for Hunting Closed Areas (V.A.C.)	2	5	9	0	1	0	0
Rec Sites & Trails	3	44.5	1	0	0	0	0
	64	252.5	582	0	13	397	22

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 (2) x Patrols (6) = 12 hrs. of travel time (round trip). This is time over and above time spent in the AMA.

AMA	Round Trip Travel (hrs)	# of Patrols	Officer Travel Time (hrs)
Alexander Creek	2	18	36
Barnes Lake	3	2	6
Chauncey Todhunter	2.6	7	18.2
Corbin	1.34	8	10.72
East Flathead	4	12	48
Galton Range	2	9	18
Grave Prairie	1.5	18	27
Sheep	1	20	20
Upper Elk Valley	3	4	12
Upper Flathead	2	7	14
Upper Wigwam	2	2	4
Weigert Creek	1.66	5	8.3
Wigwam Flats	0.84	20	16.8
Total:			239.02

Table 4: Summary of 2019 statistics.

Filtered numbers are for the months of Nov-Dec.

Statistics	Total	Filtered
Officer Time (hrs)	656.7	51.75
Contacts	989	51
Access Charges	2	0
Access Warnings	17	3
Advice Provided	489	52
Other Violations	50	2

- 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 60% 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 2019 the AMCEP conducted **132** patrols within the Electoral Area "A" AMA's. The patrols were completed primarily by the Access Guardian. On occasion other COS staff from the East Kootenay Zone was involved with the patrols.
- Officers spent **404.2** hours patrolling within the AMA boundaries alone. In addition to these patrols **239.02** hours were spent on travel. An additional **252.5** 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 2019 a total of **31** 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.
- A total of **895.72** hours were committed to the AMCEP.

Chart and Summary from 2011-2019

Table 5: Summary of statistics of the AMCEP results from 2011 to 2015 and 2017-2019. The program was on hold for 2016.

AMCEP Statistics from 2011-2019									
	2011 (Aug-Oct)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Patrols Conducted	65	123	146	170	148		131	154	132
Number of Events	5	32	82	92	48		47	54	64
Hours on Site	258.06	524.5	549	518.5	630		391.5	413	404.2
Hours on Events (presentations and investigative time)	7	110.25	284.75	290.5	159		103.25	146	252.5
Advice Provided	61	951	1408	1451	578		742	611	489
Contacts Made	441	1308	1717	1544	1113		828	1082	582
Access Warning Tickets	11	24	32	40	8		10	10	17
Access Violation Tickets	6	7	15	20	13		6	10	2
Other Violation Tickets	8	42	31	23	28		14	31	50
Travel Time (to/from AMA)	62.13	135.93	135.64	153.64	143.05		119.25	254.12	252.5

- 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	18
Hours on site	75.5
# of contacts	64
# educated	1
Access Charges	1
Access Warnings	8
Other Violations	6

- 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, UTV and dirt bikes) from the Atlas staging area in the Crowsnest Pass. The complaints in 2019 have decreased since the previous years. This was likely due to the Alberta Parks ORV restrictions in the Crowsnest Pass.
- Access into the Alexander Creek AMA through the BC 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. BC

Parks unloaded concrete barricades in the spring of 2018 and rock boulders in the spring of 2019, but it has not stopped motorists from driving around them.

- Trail cameras have been utilized throughout the AMA that has led to current investigations.

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, Cranbrook ATV Clubs and Teck Coal Incorporated as they own the southern portion of the AMA as their Conservation Land. 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	2
Hours on site	3.5
# of contacts	10
# educated	0
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	4
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 accessed by ATVs and snowmobiles. 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, snowmobiles are exempted. From the closure it is a 30 minute hike to Barnes Lake. Barnes Lake offers 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 COS staff patrolled to Barnes Lake AMA twice during the summer. 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 spring 2020.

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 Access Guardian will stage at the trailhead and provide information to trail users.

The main road up to Barnes AMA was opened up in the late spring for logging that has created easier access for trucks. It is unknown when the road will be deactivated.

Chauncey Todhunter



Table 8

Patrols	7
Hours on site	21.75
# of contacts	34
# educated	0
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	14
Other Violations	1

- 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 is no entry 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.

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.

Due to the close proximity of the AMA, the COS also conducts patrols of the Teck Coal Inc. Fording and Greenhills mines 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	8
Hours on site	25.5
# of contacts	42
# educated	0
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	4
Other Violations	0

- Michel Creek twists along the Corbin Road which makes it convenient for the COS to check anglers while also verifying compliance within the AMA. 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 Access Guide to the campers. Campers were reminded to report any 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.
- 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. Workers have permits they are legally required to display in the window of their vehicles. The Access Guardian provided education to a number of contractors working in the area.

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 (South and North Loop Road).

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	12
Hours on site	90.5
# of contacts	32
# educated	0
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	4
Other Violations	5

- 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.
- 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. 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:

The use of a drone could be utilized next summer during a weekend with nice weather to see if there is any non-compliance.

A yearly focused project in the summer or fall in the East Flathead AMA will continue to be conducted by the East Kootenay COS.

Logging will continue into the spring of 2020 and the logging companies have agreed to deactivate all new roads created within the AMA.

Galton Range



Table 11

Patrols	9
Hours on site	17.5
# of contacts	21
# educated	0
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	15
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 (bucks) continues till the end of November.

Recommendations:

The broken gate to Rabbit Lake/Upper Wigwam AMA in Phillips Pass still needs to be fixed. Locks are continuously being cut in the southern Galton Range.

Grave Prairie



Table 12

Patrols	18
Hours on site	39
# of contacts	45
# educated	0
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	13
Other Violations	3

- Grave Prairie was 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 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 8 years.
- In the past signs in the Grave Prairie AMA have been removed and damaged. In 2019 only a couple signs were removed in the same area (side road off Harmer Road).

Recommendations:

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. Teck has done an excellent job by locking gates, ditching roads and posting signage in this area. They are the land owner along with the Nature Trust for Grave Prairie AMA.

Sheep Mountain



Table 13

Patrols	20
Hours on site	29.2
# of contacts	26
# educated	0
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	9
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.

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 before the next regulation update (2020 regulation changed).

Patrols will continue to be conducted in the winter months as snow bikes are becoming a bigger concern in this AMA.

Upper Elk Valley-Fording



Table 14

Patrols	4
Hours on site	13
# of contacts	11
# educated	0
Access Charges	1
Access Warnings	10
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 people 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. The Elkford ATV club members 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 Weary Creek Provincial recreation site and the Aldridge Creek Provincial recreation trails are both closed to motorized traffic and are maintained by the Hornaday Wilderness Society. The Hornaday Wilderness Society will continue to maintain the trails for horseback, biking 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 late summer and fall season for anglers and hunters.

It has been reported that younger ATV operators have been damaging portions of the Elk River Forest Service Road. In order to lawfully 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.

CO's also enforces the BC Recreation Sites and Trails regulation which means they will be enforcing any non-compliance within the Recreation Campgrounds (camper over staying their 14 day visit to the recreation campground).

Upper Flathead



Table 15

Patrols	7
Hours on site	22
# of contacts	2
# educated	0
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	0
Other Violations	0

- This AMA is remote and takes a full day to gain access by vehicle.
- This AMA is open for snowmobiling in the winter.
- The CO's patrolled from the McIvroy FSR to the Flathead FSR in the Upper Flathead AMA where they encountered a couple hunters and contractor, one was on an ATV. The new gates that were built after the 2017 fires have helped restrict access on the closed roads.

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 2020 there should be an increase in patrols to the Barnes Meadow area (reports of motorized abuse).

Upper Wigwam



Table 16

Patrols	2
Hours on site	8.5
# of contacts	4
# educated	0
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	2
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 FSR 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.

Recommendations:

More focus on educating anglers regarding the AMA boundaries should be continued.

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 in late August.

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

Weigert Creek



Table 17

Patrols	5
Hours on site	4.75
# of contacts	2
# educated	0
Access Charges	0
Access Warnings	1
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. Travel 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.
- 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. This is planned to be posted by the Habitat staff for 2020.

Wigwam Flats



Table 18

Patrols	20
Hours on site	53.5
# of contacts	114
# educated	1
Access Charges	2
Access Warnings	8
Other Violations	11

- 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 in the past by hand picking the invasive plants.
- The Wildlife Branch had the area sprayed for invasive plant species (hawk weed, st johns wart) in October.
- 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.
- E-bikes are being utilized in this area and will be charged under the WLA if they are operating on a non-motorized road.

Recommendations:

The Access Guardian will continue to conduct day patrols during any time of the week in 2019. It would be best to do most ATV patrols during the open seasonal roads on June 15-July15 where people go off the main open roads; users such as ATV riders, 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 section between Rocky Ridge Road and the Wigwam Road.

Education/Outreach

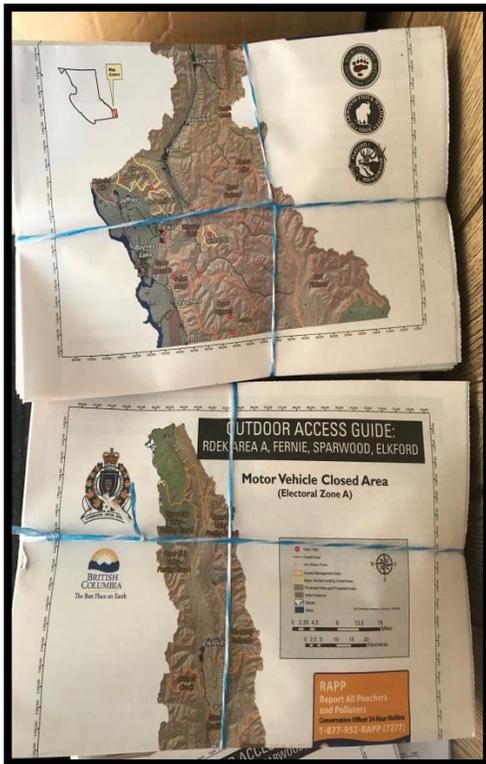
In the spring of 2019 the Access Guardian attended Municipal Mayor/Council and RDEK meetings for a review of the program and presented a short power point presentation showing the charts and pictures of the AMA's. Education and outreach is always a top priority within the program. One of the main educational 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. 2500 copies of the OAG were printed in time for the 2019 hunting season and was paid for by Sparwood Fish and Wildlife Association, Elkford Rod and Gun Club and the BC Chapter of the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Club. The free guide for the public was traditionally 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. Volunteers from the clubs that paid for the magazine also distributed them throughout the Elk Valley giving the local CO's more time to focus on file work/call outs.

There are plans for a new Outdoor Access Guide for 2020 which is mentioned below. Since it was created in 2013 the Outdoor Access Guide has been very useful for hunters and other recreational users.

- The Access Guardian continued communication with the Ecosystem Biologist throughout the year. 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, Elkford and Sparwood Mayor and Council Members, Sparwood Fish and Wildlife Association and the Elkford Rod and Gun 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.
- One 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. The legislation will be updated to include the wording of pedal assisted bikes within the BC Wildlife Act.

- 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 2019 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 in 2019. The club and FLNRO's Habitat Biologist have spent countless 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 of \$10,000 was met. It is anticipated that the new magazine will be ready for the fall of 2020 once the new regulation changes have been updated on the AMA maps.



The 2019 Outdoor Access Guide was purchased by the Sparwood Fish and Wildlife Association, Elkford Rod and Gun Club and BC Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.

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 2019.

- Since 2015 the Conservation Officer Service has been mandated with enforcing the Off Road Vehicle Act (ORVA). During the winter of 2018-19 the East Kootenay COS patrolled crown land, Forest Service Roads and snowmobile staging areas to conduct compliance checks. There continues to be a high noncompliance rate with 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 Fernie COS met with the Fernie Snowmobile Associations (FSA) and 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.
- There are a number of motorized closures in the East Kootenay's for the purpose of protecting caribou. CO Burley took part in a project north of Cranbrook in March to patrol for snowmobilers that have been accessing these closures. Patrols were conducted by helicopter, truck and snowmobile.
- 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".
- In September of 2019 COS and the Canada Wildlife Service (CWS) conducted a 3 day road check within the Elk Valley. The COS and CWS inspected over a hundred vehicles. The area we selected incorporated Sheep Mountain AMA.
- The Access Guardian, CO Gordon and Inspector Caravetta marched in the Fernie Remembrance Day Parade and Ceremony on November 11th.

2020 Recommendations

- AMA outreach and education will be ongoing throughout 2020. The Fernie CO's will book presentations with the Elk Valley High Schools before the May long weekend.
- Trail cameras and drones have proven to be useful tools to catch non-compliance within the AMA's. The program has a total of three trail cameras that the Access Guardian utilizes every year. The Drone has been used in several of the East Kootenay AMA's. It allows Officers to have an aerial view to determine non-compliance, areas of concern or an offence in progress. Prior to having access to the Drone the only way to achieve this was through the use of helicopters which are costly. One of the five Provincial CO Drone Operators are in Fernie; CO Gordon.

Summary

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 Columbia's resources are kept sustainable for future generations. The AMCEP achieved over 800 hours of committed AMA patrols, compliance and enforcement checks, investigations and education/outreach in 2019 despite an increase in COS core mandate related work. 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.

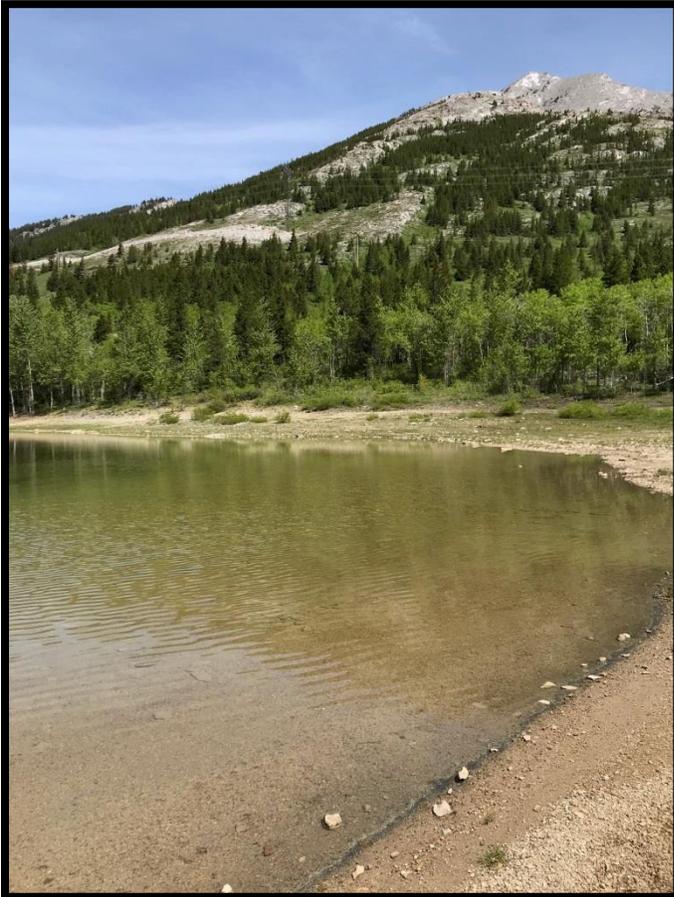
Appendix



Alexander AMA: Deadman's Pass



East Flathead AMA: Proctor Lake



Alexander AMA: Phillips Lake



East Flathead AMA



Grave Prairie AMA