

To the recreation community:

The summer of 2021 represented an unprecedented wildfire year in British Columbia in which over 550,000 hectares burnt across the Thompson Okanagan Region.

The fires and fire suppression activities (e.g. the creation of more than 2,900 km of fire guards) have opened areas that were previously difficult to access and resulted in habitats that are extremely sensitive to disturbance.

The BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) has responded by proposing *Emergency* Motor Vehicle Closures (MVC) under the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation (MVPR) of the *Wildlife Act* (Section 109) over the following major wildfire areas.

Fire	Fire number	MVC area (ha)
Sparks Lake	K21001	105,131
Momich Lake	K21658	28,651
Tremont Creek	K21849	74,509
Two Mile Road	K42078	4,724
Bunting Road	K41561	7,167
Hunakwa/Crazy Creek complex	K41676/ K41769	8,592
Thomas Creek	K51794	16,350
Nk'Mip	K52061	20,714
July Mountain	K61882	23,316
White Rock Lake	K61884	99,409
Garrison Lake	K62088	18,328
Mckay Creek	K71030	44,784
Mowhokam Creek	V11669	8,941
Lytton complex	K71086/ K70804	96,087

These MVC proposals have been rapidly developed to ensure the decision can be made to establish them prior to the expiration of Area Restrictions that were put in place by the BC Wildfire service to manage public safety.

The purpose of the proposed MVCs is to prevent further damage to the now sensitive soils and vegetation within the burned areas, to prevent the spread of invasive species, and to minimize access to vulnerable wildlife populations.

The motor vehicle prohibitions propose to close roads and trails in the above areas to all unauthorized use of vehicles. This includes automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, motorhomes, e-bikes, and all types of off-road recreational vehicles, wheeled or tracked, including snowmobiles. Non-motorized uses (e.g. bicycle, horse) will not be restricted.

As proposed, the motor vehicle prohibition will not apply to authorized commercial users performing activities associated with agreements awarded pursuant to provincial statutes (such as an existing tenure), nor will it restrict individuals using motor vehicles on, or to access, private land.

As these areas are sensitive to disturbance, if you do have authorization to go into the closure areas, please stay on existing roads to minimize any disturbance.

This is a temporary measure that is proposed to be in effect while restoration activities for the fire area are being planned and initiated. It is anticipated that they will be amended as staff have a better understanding of fire severity and as recreation infrastructure is repaired and/or made safe for public use.

Maps and more information on motor vehicle closures will be available at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/recreation> or by contacting Front Counter BC.

Please see below for additional details on the proposed closure.

Thank you for your cooperation and support as we focus on recovering the land base affected by these wildfires.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Valdal', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Eric Valdal**

Director of Resource Management  
Thompson-Okanagan Region

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development  
Kamloops, BC.

**Thompson Okanagan Region  
Proposed Wildfire Motorized Vehicle Restrictions  
Frequently Asked Questions**

**Why are these motorized vehicle restrictions being put in place?**

- Communities and forests were severely impacted by the 2021 Wildfire season with more than 550,000 ha of habitat in the Thompson Okanagan Region burnt.
- The 2021 wildfires and fire suppression activities (e.g., creation of approximately 2,900 km of fire guards) have opened up areas that were previously difficult to access.
- High road and fire guard densities, improved sight lines for hunters and predators across burnt landscapes, and concentration into remnant habitats is likely to increase vulnerability of wildlife populations.
- Unauthorized public access can have negative effects on sensitive burned ecosystems including increased soil compaction, increased spread of invasive species, and accelerated erosion of wildfire-charred soils which impacts aquatic ecosystems and fish habitat.

**Will these motor vehicle prohibitions be permanent?**

- These closures are intended as a temporary measure that will be in effect while restoration activities for the fire area are being planned and initiated. Although there is no 'sunset clause' in the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation, the intent is to repeal or replace these closures in approximately 18 months time. Where appropriate, they will be replaced with site-specific mechanisms that reflect the fire severity, the degree of recovery, and the intent of the recovery plans that will be collaboratively developed with First Nations, and informed by Stakeholders.

**What types of vehicles are included in this prohibition?**

- The Motor Vehicle Closure applies to all motorized vehicles including automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, motorhomes, electric bikes and all types of off-road recreational vehicles, wheeled or tracked (including snowmobiles).

**Which roads and trails are included in this motor vehicle closure?**

- All forest service roads except those identified in green on the motor vehicle closure maps.
- All recreation trails, and trail networks.

**Which roads are not included in this motor vehicle closure?**

The following roads are accessible within the closure areas:

- All public roads.

For the purposes of this closure, a public road is defined as a road that is maintained by the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

- Roads operated by BC Parks
- Forest Service roads that are explicitly identified as open and highlighted green on the motor vehicle closure maps.

Accessible Forest Service Roads are typically two-lane mainline gravel roads that provide routes through a motor vehicle closure polygon.

#### **Can I hunt or recreate within the motor vehicle closure areas?**

- Hunting is permitted within the motor vehicle closure areas.
- Motor vehicle closures can be accessed by non-motorized means for any recreational purpose (e.g. on foot, horseback or bicycle).
- As this area is sensitive to disturbance, if you do need to go into the area, please stay on existing roads and trails to minimize any disturbance.

#### **Are there any exceptions to the current motor vehicle prohibitions?**

- The order does not apply to commercial activities except for hunting.
- Individuals may use or operate a motor vehicle on private property and on roads used to access private property.

#### **Can I get a permit to access a closure area using a motor vehicle?**

- You may apply for an exemption to access a motor vehicle closed area through Front Counter BC at [FrontCounter BC – Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations – Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/recreation/fishing-hunting/hunting/regulations-synopsis/regulation-synopsis-corrections-and-updates)

#### **Will the closure be enforced?**

- Enforcement patrols will ensure compliance with these prohibitions.

#### **How can I find out more information?**

More Information on the MVC and maps can be found:

- On the Provincial Hunting & Trapping Regulations Synopsis Corrections and Updates website at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/recreation/fishing-hunting/hunting/regulations-synopsis/regulation-synopsis-corrections-and-updates>
- By emailing Regional resource management at: [2021Wildlife.closures@gov.bc.ca](mailto:2021Wildlife.closures@gov.bc.ca)
- By calling 250-362-4683. Note that this is an answering service. Staff will return your call within 2 business days.