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## INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release  
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April 8, 2020

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

### **Camping, ORV use restricted in Koocanusa area**

CRANBROOK – The B.C. government is restricting camping and motorized recreation (including the use of off-road vehicles) throughout the entire Koocanusa Recreation Strategy area this spring and summer.

These restrictions will help prevent environmental damage and ensure orders and guidance from the provincial health officer related to the COVID-19 pandemic are followed.

The restrictions will take effect at 1 p.m. (Mountain time) on Wednesday, April 8, 2020, and will remain in place until further notice.

Although overnight camping will be prohibited in this area, people may still use designated roads and trails on a day-use basis as long as they adhere to physical distancing guidelines and other restrictions that may be in place.

The Koocanusa Recreation Strategy (see link below) contains a map of the Koocanusa Recreation Strategy area.

These restrictions are implemented by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development under Section 58 of the Forest and Range Practices Act, in partnership with the Conservation Officer Service, the RCMP, the Ktunaxa Nation and the Tobacco Plains Indian Band, as well as other local government stakeholders in the region.

There have been growing concerns in recent years about unauthorized mudbogging (i.e., operating or racing off-road vehicles in wet earth or mud) on Crown land around the Koocanusa reservoir — particularly in the Dorr Road and Umbrella Beach areas — and its associated impacts on the land and the environment.

Specific stewardship concerns due to mudbogging and related activities include:

- water and soil contamination;
- damage to forest and rangeland habitat;
- lack of sanitation and garbage facilities;
- public safety;
- impacts on archeological and cultural resources;
- damage to recreational infrastructure; and
- displacement of wildlife.

The Section 58 restrictions are consistent with orders and guidance issued by the provincial health officer under the provincial state of emergency, regarding physical distancing and a prohibition on public gatherings of more than 50 people. In the midst of a global pandemic that

has affected hundreds of people throughout this province and neighbouring jurisdictions, British Columbians and visitors from other provinces are urged to follow the advice of public health officials.

The restrictions will be enforced by the Province's natural resource officers, conservation officers and the RCMP, who will conduct regular patrols and educate the public at access points into the area. People who do not comply with the restrictions may be issued a violation ticket for \$115 and told to leave the area.

The restrictions for the Koocanusa Recreation Strategy area align with the decision by Recreation Sites and Trails BC to close its campgrounds and amenities to gatherings and overnight camping in response to COVID-19.

#### **Quick Facts:**

- The B.C. government has been working collaboratively with the Ktunaxa Nation, stakeholders and local governments for several years on a Koocanusa Recreation Strategy.
- The development of this strategy includes the management of camping and trail use in the area.
- Mudbogging is not considered a legitimate activity and is neither supported nor included in the Koocanusa Recreation Strategy.

#### **Learn More:**

Koocanusa Recreation Strategy: <http://www.koocanusarecreation.ca/koocanusa-recreation-strategy>

Recreation Sites and Trails BC: [www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca](http://www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca)

For the latest medical updates, including case counts, prevention, risks and testing, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

Or follow @CDCofBC on Twitter.

For the provincial health officer's orders, notices and guidance, visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/phoguidance](http://www.gov.bc.ca/phoguidance)

For non-health related information, including financial, child care and education supports, travel, transportation and essential service information, visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/Covid-19](http://www.gov.bc.ca/Covid-19)  
Or call 1 888 COVID19 (1 888 268-4319) between 7:30 a.m. and 8 p.m., seven days a week.

#### **Contact:**

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