

On 2020-08-06 12:27 p.m., Lillooet Naturalist Society wrote:

Hi, everyone.

You may already have heard of the emergency closure of the Texas Creek FSR. We thought you should get the background and some additional information.

A couple of weeks ago, a film crew made a 4x4 video that was posted to YouTube, which highlighted the road access into Molybdenite Lake and Ouchie Basin, tributaries of Texas Creek. This sparked concerns over the area being further popularized (for many years it has been a fairly popular destination for 4x4 groups, with at least a few vehicles a day going into the valley during summer and fall) and the effect of that on the grizzly bears using the valley. To that end, Sekw'el'was sent out a letter announcing an emergency closure of the road, from July 30-Nov.30.

This is all on the heels of various discussions and reports of concerns with the seemingly heavy pressure on our backcountry this year, likely the results of Covid19, which has provided a unique combination of factors:

- Increased number of people with time off (due to lower employment rates),
- Lack of ability (and funds) to travel further afield as might be our previous "normal",
- Earlier closures of campgrounds and Rec. Sites, which led people to explore less popular areas that were accessible, but without the toilet, campfire pits or other facilities usually found at organized sites,
- The ability of social media to spread the word of the more interesting spots,
- Ongoing closures of popular spots like Joffre Lakes, that might have taken some of the pressure of these other areas.

The position of the Lillooet Naturalists Society is that while it is good that more people are interested in connecting with nature and staying/spending locally in BC while doing that, as a group we can do a few things to minimize the negatives of this interest, and perhaps get ahead of future increases in BC's population:

- Local NGO's and Municipal/RD governments (you can do this personally too) need to lobby the Province for additional organized campsites, better trail maintenance etc., as well as a greater enforcement "presence" in the backcountry.
- Determine the carrying capacity of our more popular areas, and ways of managing that pressure.
- Press for a recreational synopsis - similar to the hunting and angling synopsis's - which would outline expectations before folks arrive at the various sites they are wanting to visit. Hunters and anglers receive their "rule book" when they buy their licences. A similar system could be brought in for backcountry recreation.
- Encourage our school systems to provide education on backcountry etiquette and safety as part of ongoing education to students.

- Report violations to the appropriate authorities: trailhead vandalism to the RCMP, wildlife or motorized access issues (usually wildlife regulation based) to FLNRO: <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hen/nrv/report.htm> .

Regards, Geoff

On behalf of your Directors