

From: Ethier, Tom FLNR:EX Tom.Ethier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Dr. Burger:

Thank you for your letter regarding motor vehicle advertisements in the 2016-2018 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Synopsis and off-road vehicle impacts on wildlife habitat. I have been asked to respond and I apologize for the lengthy delay.

The Fish and Wildlife Branch is responsible for determining the acceptability of advertisements for the regulations synopses. At a minimum, the advertisements must use language, provide information, and depict or suggest activities that are legal, ethical, accurate, safe, non-discriminatory, apolitical, and consistent with the Government of British Columbia's vision and objectives. In addition to the above criteria, the Fish and Wildlife Branch may refuse any advertisement at the discretion of its director.

Examples of advertisements that contravene these principles, and will therefore not be considered for publication in the regulations synopses, include but are not limited to those that depict the harming of fish, wildlife, their habitats, or the natural environment in some way—for instance, images of vehicles being driven through streams, wetlands, or off-road alpine areas are not approved for inclusion in the synopsis.

Motor vehicle advertisements included in the 2016-2018 Hunting and Trapping Synopsis were considered to fall within the criteria described above. There were a number of motor vehicle advertisements that were rejected due to the images contravening the advertising guidelines.

It is important to note that the location where the advertisement photos were taken is unknown, but many were taken outside of British Columbia. The recent amendments to the *Off Road Vehicle Act* that include requirements to register and display a numbered plate or decal are specific to British Columbia and do not necessarily apply to the locations where these photos were taken. We agree that the provinces' legal expectation should be depicted in advertisements and guidelines to the advertisers will be up to date with the licencing requirement of off-road vehicles. We will also review the layout to increase references to the Natural Resource Violations hotline.

The Province has taken meaningful steps to reduce disturbance to wildlife and habitat damage caused by motor vehicles. As you have noted, the 2015 regulations requiring licensing of ORVs are a significant step. Other recent examples of reducing the impact of motor vehicles on wildlife and habitat include the May 2016 additions of the Oliver Mountain, Shulaps Mountain, and Cayoosh Mountain to the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulations of the *Wildlife Act*. Also of note are regulations, enacted within the last 5 years, prohibiting the operation of motor vehicles off of existing roads and trails above 1,700m in the Thompson and Okanagan regions. The Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation of the *Wildlife Act* currently closes over 100 areas of the province, many of which are hundreds of thousands of hectares in size, to the operation of all motor vehicles with the objective of protecting wildlife habitat. It is important to note that, through the biennial wildlife regulation cycle, there are continuous net gains in the number of motor vehicle prohibited areas in the province, and it is anticipated that further areas will be identified and added in the coming years.

Your feedback regarding the advertisements in the Hunting and Trapping Regulations Synopsis is appreciated, and Fish and Wildlife Branch staff will take them into consideration for the next publication in 2018.

Yours truly,

Tom Ethier
Assistant Deputy Minister
Resource Stewardship Division

pc: Jennifer Psyllakis, Director, Fish and Wildlife Branch