



## **Fort Shepherd Conservancy Area Motorized Access to Fort Shepherd via Teck Gate Policy**

### **1. Background**

The Fort Shepherd Conservancy Area (FSCA) is a private conservation property managed by The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC). Motorized access to FSCA requires passage through a locked gate located on land owned by Teck Resources Limited. This gate is not on Fort Shepherd property but must be crossed via Teck's private road to reach the site.

TLC holds an access agreement with Teck, which defines and limits how access through this gate may be granted. Public or general use of the gate is not permitted under the terms of this agreement.

### **2. Purpose of the Access Agreement**

TLC's access to Fort Shepherd via the Teck gate is defined by Teck's terms. The access agreement is in place to:

- Allow members of the public to travel by foot, bicycle, or horseback along the Teck road to reach Fort Shepherd during the open season (May 1st to October 31st);
- Permit TLC staff and approved contractors to access Fort Shepherd by motorized vehicle to carry out conservation, restoration, and stewardship activities.

Importantly, TLC does not have the authority to distribute or approve Teck gate key access. All gate keys are held by Teck and may only be issued at Teck's sole discretion under the following conditions:

- To complete contracted work on Teck-owned land;
- To carry out projects that have been reviewed and approved by Teck on Teck-owned land;
- Where access is required due to legal obligations (e.g., placer claims, easements, or statutory rights-of-way);
- If TLC has submitted a formal request for access on behalf of contractors, consultants, or stewardship personnel.

This access structure ensures protection of sensitive habitat, particularly for species at risk, and addresses the legacy of damaging vehicle use that occurred before 2017.

### **3. Policy on Teck Gate Key Requests for Access to FSCA**

- Gate keys are not available to the public, or to individuals or groups for general use, even if their purpose is organizational, recreational or cultural.

- TLC cannot issue, loan, or replicate Teck’s gate keys. All access requests that require use of the gate must go through TLC for review and possible submission to Teck, if they align with the criteria above.
- Unauthorized key use or access will be reported to Teck and may result in access restrictions.

#### **4. Chaperoned Access to FSCA**

TLC supports public and Indigenous community connection to Fort Shepherd through chaperoned access:

- Any person or group wishing to visit Fort Shepherd by motorized access must submit a written request to TLC at least 10 business days in advance.
- TLC may coordinate site access with one of our volunteer stewards, who are authorized gate keyholders and can open the gate for scheduled, supervised visits.
- All access must align with TLC’s conservation mandate and occur within the public open season (May 1<sup>st</sup> –October 31<sup>st</sup>).

For any visit to Fort Shepherd involving vehicle access, a TLC-authorized steward must accompany the group or individual. This applies whether the visitor is riding in the TLC vehicle or driving their own vehicle through the Teck gate.

Being “chaperoned” does not mean that visitors are required to remain with the steward for the full duration of the visit. The steward may be completing other work on the property and may agree to reconvene with the group at a designated time and place to depart together. A reasonable level of privacy and autonomy will be accommodated wherever possible.

This requirement exists for two important reasons:

- To minimize vehicle disturbance to wildlife and ecological values in the FSCA, and ensure use is aligned with TLC’s conservation goals;
- To ensure safety, as much of the FSCA has no cell service and no easy access for emergency responders.

Visitors are expected to follow the steward’s guidance and abide by the agreed-upon timeframes for departure.

#### **5. Denial of Requests**

TLC reserves the right to deny access requests at its discretion. Reasons for denial may include, but are not limited to:

- Conflicts with scheduled conservation, research, or restoration activities;
- Requests that fall outside the scope of the access agreement or are otherwise unauthorized;

- Lack of available stewards to safely chaperone the visit;
- Concerns related to safety, wildlife disturbance, or potential ecological impacts;
- Seasonal closure periods or fire/weather risk conditions;

TLC's priority is to uphold ecological integrity and fulfill its stewardship responsibilities in accordance with the access agreement and conservation values of the property.

## **6. Seasonal Closure for Habitat Protection**

Fort Shepherd is closed to the public from November through April to protect wildlife during critical ecological periods. Specifically, the property includes designated Ungulate Winter Range, where undisturbed conditions are essential for the survival of species such as mule deer and elk during winter months. No public access is permitted during this time.

## **7. Access and Use Guidelines**

TLC welcomes responsible visitors who engage in activities that align with the ecological and cultural stewardship goals of the FSCA, including light recreation, nature appreciation, and cultural practices by Indigenous people.

- No motorized vehicle access, including cars, trucks, or off-road vehicles (ORVs), except where explicitly authorized by TLC.
- Access is allowed by foot, bicycle, or horseback along the main road only.
- Please respect all wildlife habitat and stay on designated paths.
- Pack it in, pack it out – no dumping or littering.
- Do not cut, remove, or damage trees, plants, or natural features.
- No overnight camping is permitted.
- Leashed dogs are allowed on the property to protect wildlife and ground-nesting species.
- No fires or smoking are permitted due to wildfire risk.
- No firearms or shooting of guns is permitted anywhere on the property.
- No harassment or disturbance of wildlife.
- Cell service is limited – please plan accordingly.
- Access is at your own risk. In case of emergency, dial 911.

## **8. Enforcement and Protection**

The FSCA is a conservation property protected for its wildlife habitat, endangered species, and cultural values. Activities that pose a risk to wildlife, habitat, or heritage features may be reported to the

Conservation Officer Service or the RCMP. TLC takes violations seriously to protect the land for future generations.

### **9. Review and Updates**

This policy is subject to review and revision at TLC's discretion. Updates may occur in response to:

- Amendments to the access agreement with Teck Resources Ltd.;
- Shifts in conservation priorities, seasonal conditions, or management planning;
- Emerging partnerships or access arrangements with Indigenous Nations or community actors.

TLC will ensure that any changes are communicated transparently to relevant parties and aligned with the long-term care of the Fort Shepherd Conservancy Area.

#### **Contact for Requests and Inquiries:**

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