



Mountain Caribou Management Implementation Newsletter

December 2007

A lot has happened since the last October update on the Mountain Recovery Implementation Plan. We are moving ahead on all the different management levers and continue to involve many government agencies working together coordinating human resources and budgets towards a common goal.

Habitat Teams

The development of the incremental habitat maps and reports for each of the five planning units is just about complete. These areas were identified by local planning teams including Herd experts and then made available for review by First Nations and affected parties. These areas will be reviewed by the Directors Committee and decisions will be made where options have been identified by the local planning teams.

Maps and habitat reports can be found at the following FTP site:
ftp://ftpprg.env.gov.bc.ca/pub/outgoing/requests/SARCO_Mtn_Caribou_Recovery.

These areas will be protected from road building and harvesting once they have been legally defined sometime next year.

First Nations

We are currently working with First Nations that have identified an interest in this project including initiatives such as workshops, involving Band members in the local planning groups and establishing local Government-to-Government agreements.

Progress Board

The Progress Board will be set in the spring of 2008 and made up of the appropriate number of members to represent First Nations, stakeholders and public groups affected by the mountain recovery strategy. The purpose of the Board is to monitor the progress of implementation activities for all management levers and to provide feedback on management actions in order to contribute towards adaptive management to achieve recovery goals identified in the Cabinet decision.

Predator Control

This is a critical piece of the puzzle and needs to be done in a very coordinated systematic approach. To that end, the Ministry of Environment will work on wolf control programs where they feel they have enough information on the wolf packs to move ahead with a control program. In other areas more research and collaring will be done this winter as well as fertility control of the breeding pairs in some areas.

Prey Control

The purpose of this program is lower alternate prey numbers in some areas adjacent to Caribou habitat through liberalised hunting to lower prey biomass and avoid a rapid increase in wolves. To be successful this program needs to be done only after successful predator reduction has occurred. More research and inventories will take place next year to provide a baseline for measuring alternate prey numbers and possible reduction.

Augmentation

Augmentation has been postponed until next year due to a number of reasons including a more comprehensive census of the Caribou populations.

Considerable work will be done with First Nations in donor and recipient herd regions once it is determined where donor herds will be located.

Public Recreation

Government staff have been meeting with local snowmobiling groups to try to develop Stewardship Management Agreements (SMAs).

Prince George Team – have held discussions with clubs regarding their issues. Those include access to alternate riding areas (outside Caribou habitat). Most club riders are low elevation, non mountain riders. Only small subsets are mountain riders so may be challenging to identify this group. Some other user groups (backcountry skiers) have approached the team interested in developing Best Management Practices to avoid displacement of Caribou.

Williams Lake Team – Club meetings will be held on December 18, 2007 to begin discussions. Additional meetings planned for January (depending on the outcome of the December 18, 2007 meeting). The Williams Lake club is interested in developing an alternative area and has made a submission to the Western Diversification Fund. They will also be making a submission to the Mountain Caribou Recovery Implementation Project.

Kamloops Team – Meeting with a broad group of stakeholders was held in Blue River on December 13, 2007. Meeting with clubs planned for early January. Mapping discrepancies are being addressed.

West Kootenay Team – Prioritisation of riding areas/closure areas currently underway by local team. Meetings with clubs planned for early January. Mapping discrepancies are being addressed.

East Kootenay Team – The Cranbrook West Access Management Plan is deemed to substantially meet SARCO recovery objective for the area.

SMAs still planned for completion by end of April.

Commercial Recreation

Monitoring reports for Best Management Practices are being received for 06/07 operating season from HeliCat Canada operators.

Operators are being informed of their position in Caribou habitat. Plans to involve non HeliCat Canada operators in best management practices/stewardship discussions will be in January.

Effectiveness monitoring workshop is planned for early May involving operators, herd experts, and non-government organizations.

New application moratoriums are in place and processes for adjudicating applications in the system have been developed. All adjudications will consider the impact of the proposal on Caribou recovery, including input from the Ministry of Environment and/or herd experts.

As you can see, lots has been going on with lots more to do in the New Year.

(more info can be found at the SARCO website <http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/sarco/mc/>)

Hope you and your family have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Peter Lishman
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