

Canada's boreal forest stretches from Newfoundland and Labrador to the Yukon. It is an iconic Canadian landscape comprised of White and Black Spruce, Jack Pine, Tamarack, Balsam Fir, Balsam Poplar, White Birch, Trembling Aspen and deep peat deposits which together function as one of the world's largest carbon reservoirs.

The boreal forest is home to a rich variety of wildlife including wolves, black bear, moose, caribou, loons, eagles, wolverine, muskrat, martin and beaver along with numerous species of birds and fish.

Boreal woodland caribou populations are a serious conservation concern because of declining populations overall and their disappearance from the southern extents of their historical range. In 2003 the species was listed as threatened under the federal Species At Risk Act (SARA). The Province of Saskatchewan has also identified the Boreal Woodland Caribou as a conservation priority which together with the Federal SARA listing, establishes an imperative to ensure the survival of the caribou.

The Boreal is also home to rural communities many of which are First Nations. These communities depend on the Boreal for their livelihoods both traditional and contemporary. Forestry plays a significant role in many of these communities and conservation of the Boreal and recovery of Woodland caribou is challenged by the need to sustain economic opportunities for them. Forestry in the Boreal also contributes to the broader Canadian economy in a significant way making the challenge of developing conservation solutions that include sustainable forestry all the more important.



These recommendations have benefited from the involvement of individuals, organizations and governments, both formally and informally, throughout an extensive development process.

The Saskatchewan Regional Working Group would like to thank everyone that has generously contributed to the process with their insight, feedback and analyses. In particular, the members have appreciated the continued willingness of the Government of Saskatchewan and Aboriginal governments to meet and discuss the work undertaken by the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement in Saskatchewan.

The traditional knowledge and hospitality shared by the elders, leadership and membership of Cumberland House Cree Nation, the Northern Village of Cumberland House, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Red Earth Cree Nation, Shoal Lake Cree Nation, James Smith Cree Nation, Kinistin Saulteaux Nation, and Yellow Quill First Nation has been gracious and invaluable. Representatives of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment have also engaged with and advised the working group to help steer the process towards a constructive outcome.

The SK RWG would like to recognize the Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) for facilitating stakeholder engagement in the development of these recommendations.



SUSTAINING THE BOREAL IN EASTERN SASKATCHEWAN



The Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement commits members of the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) and participating Environmental Non-Government Organizations (ENGOS) to work with federal, provincial and Aboriginal governments and local communities across the Boreal to develop recommendations for the establishment of Protected Areas and Caribou Conservation Plans. The Saskatchewan Regional Working Group (RWG) was established to fulfill this commitment for FPAC company tenures in Saskatchewan.

The SK RWG members, Weyerhaeuser and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Saskatchewan Chapter (CPAWS-SK), have reached agreement on recommendations for a Caribou Conservation Plan within the Pasquia Porcupine Forest Management Area (FMA) and for the protection of a large new protected area in the Mossy River watershed and the full implementation of the Lobstick Lake RAN. These recommendations reflect the CBFA principle of concurrently achieving high degrees of ecological integrity and socio-economic prosperity in Canada's Boreal region and will make a significant contribution to conservation of the Boreal.



The RWG recognizes that the legal responsibility and authority for land use decisions and for conservation and resource management policy rests with governments, and that successful implementation of many aspects of their recommendations requires the active support and endorsement by all governments including Aboriginal Governments and the support of a broad array of interests including communities.

These recommendations are the product of four years of extensive analyses, and deliberations. The process has engaged Provincial and Aboriginal governments, First Nations, Métis, local communities, and stakeholder groups. It has also involved extensive expert investigation of the caribou populations, future timber supply and protected area options. These analyses demonstrate that it is possible to maintain a viable fibre supply on the FMA while conserving high value caribou habitat and improving the likelihood of caribou recovery.

These recommendations will help achieve the provincial goal to sustain and enhance woodland caribou populations and maintain the ecosystems they require throughout their current range and also keep disturbance below the threshold recommended by Environment Canada's Boreal Woodland Caribou Recovery Strategy.

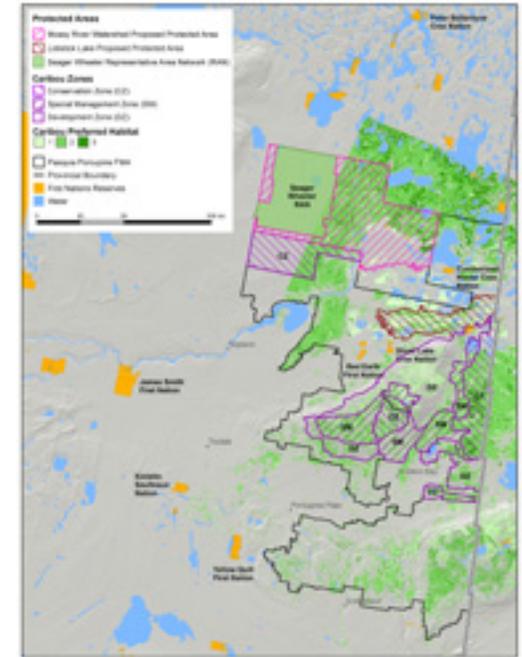
The caribou plan consists of three new management zones including:

1. Conservation zones in areas that are most important for caribou;
2. Special management zones where forestry practices are tailored to buffer conservation zones and provide connectivity between them; and,
3. Development zones with less significant caribou habitat where forestry will be more concentrated.

The Mossy River protected area recommendation centers on a globally significant area within the largest inland delta in North America. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities are involved and engagement with them will continue as the potential for a protected area is explored and considered.

The Lobstick Lake Representative Area Network (RAN) is also recommended for full protection to extend the management regime that is already in place as a result of Pasquia Porcupine Land Use Plan. Together with the existing protected areas and the conservation zones in the caribou plan a robust network of conservation lands is taking shape in the region that will help to conserve the rich biodiversity of Saskatchewan and buffer climate change while also supporting the economy.

Pasquia Porcupine Forest Management Area Caribou Conservation Plan and Protected Areas Recommendations



The Bog Herd is an interprovincial range that extends across Manitoba and Saskatchewan throughout the Mid-boreal Plan Ecozone. As a Boreal Plain population located at the southern periphery of caribou range, these animals are more susceptible to environmental change and habitat degradation. Climate change predicts a northward shift or recession of geographic range for caribou that can result in compromised population growth, low survival of young and adults, low productivity, nutritional deficiency and poor genetic diversity because of low landscape connectivity and poor connectivity to other populations.

The Bog herd is estimated to be between 225-275 animals and is genetically linked to the North Interlake herd in Manitoba. It is estimated that 25 to 50 Bog herd caribou are present in Saskatchewan and the remainder occur in Manitoba.

The Bog herd range is bounded by agricultural land to the northwest, west and southwest, by the Cumberland Delta to the north and by large water bodies (Cedar Lake/Reservoir and Lake Winnipegosis) to the east, which restricts their movement and opportunity for genetic exchange.