



Location: [MS Teams Meeting](#)



Date: Monday, September 20, 2021



Time: 1330-1600 Pacific

Revelstoke Complex and Central Selkirks Technical Working Group

Attendance: Tim Eugene, Tina Donald, Leo DeGroot, Genevieve Lachance, Aaron Reid, Robin Steenweg, Aaron Dean, Celia Nord, Deb MacKillop, Corey Bird, Greg Johnson, Bevan Ernst, Robyn Laubman, Brier Cadden, Christine Friedrichsmeier, Rieva McCuaig, Andrew Malucelli, Laura Machial, Rob Serrouya, Loni Arman, Allison Pagett

RCCSTWG Agenda September 20th			
Revelstoke Complex and Central Selkirks Herds			
1:30- 4:00 pm			
Time	Subject	Description	Responsible
1:30-1:45	Welcome	Review of last meetings minutes and Action points. Purpose and Goal of meeting	Genevieve Lachance/Darcy Peel
1:45-2:30	Disturbance and predator/prey dynamic in relation to Caribou	Caribou biologist, Rob Serrouya will present information on the dynamic between disturbance, prey and predator in relation to caribou.	Rob Serrouya, Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute
2:30- 2:50	Predator reduction	Consultation and information	Aaron Reid, Loni Arman
2:50-3:30	South Columbia and Frisby-Boulder-Queest herds	What is the future of these herds, options for survival of the animals	Aaron Reid, Corey Bird
3:30-3:45	Round table	Update on caribou topics	All
3:45-4:00	TOR, timeline-workplan, Contribution agreement	TOR- and contribution agreement?	Genevieve Lachance
4:00-4:15	Next Steps	Next meeting, Next Steps	Genevieve Lachance

NOTES

Welcome

- Genevieve had the group do a roundtable of introductions, and a review of the agenda.

Disturbance and predator/prey dynamic in relation to caribou

- Rob Serrouya presented an update on recovery measures (see presentation)
- Rob talked about the history of caribou management and protections going back to 1990's
 - Habitat loss prevents the recovery of threatened species, and Rob talked about habitat protections in BC and AB
 - Land use strategies – age classes 8, 9 (140 years & older) in subalpine not logged (Revelstoke)
- Have these federal and provincial policies “moved the needle?” – state vs rate, gross loss vs net change
 - Habitat gain? Takes over 100 y to grow back, but mostly concerned when habitat is no longer “moose food” – over 25y.
 - Loss is accelerating - 7 ranges have lost 25% of habitat since 2000 (AB 2x BC)
 - Greatest loss from harvesting in Revelstoke (fire in boreal)
 - Some “gains” (less logging) could be due to effective policies, or it could be due to less forest to be logged (depends on location)
 - Rob demonstrated how you’d go about adding more protections, and where, using an interactive map. More protected habitat in high-use area by caribou (using telemetry data) increases the chance of recovery.
 - More value in herds with more animals
 - This refers to core habitat, not matrix
 - Controversial to reduce AAC. But could we reduce harvesting in the mountains, but increase it (to compensate for AAC loss) in less diverse pine forest and where there is no caribou? Need help from foresters to answer this question
 - Klinse-Za is a success story
- Q&A
 - Tim: Does any logging activity cause caribou to avoid the area?
 - Roads make it easy for wolves to travel to cut areas
 - Predators respond to increased moose (which respond to the flush of new vegetation from harvesting)
 - Logging removes lichen (caribou food)
 - Need to prioritize where to restore areas
 - Tim: red flag component for caribou habitat (to say no to logging) (FLNRORD)
 - Tim: new population numbers?
 - Aaron – circulated most recent census report a month ago
 - All of this info is on FTP portal [\[LINK\]](#)
 - Tina: Simpcw – road rehab work, first done, second one done shortly
 - **ACTION: Genevieve to add restoration to next agenda**
 - Robyn Laubman – wants a focus on linear restoration, not just roads

Predator reduction

- Aaron Reid talked about predator reduction engagement that has just started
- Lots of recovery effort and expense – but still fighting a losing battle (human-driven factors)
- Most effective short-term recovery tool – but also the most controversial
- Still need to address underlying cause – lack of suitable caribou habitat; can't be doing this for 20 years straight (won't have social license either)
- Works best in conjunction with other tools
- Q&A
 - Corey asked about how long it will be to bring more habitat online? How long do we have to do wolf control?
 - Aaron replied that it depends on the herd – some herds it could be a decade, some several decades. We haven't really forecasted. Caribou habitat recovery is 80+ years, but right now we are just focused on the habitat not being suitable for moose – and therefore predators.
 - Leo added that it also depends on how much habitat we can protect, and how we can manage matrix habitat. How quickly we can accomplish that, as well as how fast trees can grow. Definitely we are thinking decades.
 - But a decade of wolf control will definitely be wearing thin for social license
 - Moose reduction is a success story, but running both moose and wolf reduction together is doubly contentious – especially in the north
 - Cow moose harvest map of Rob's – only 5 cow moose harvested! Would be helpful to have them more available. Aaron reassured the group that we have infographics now available on the website and trying to get broader distribution
- Loni – leading the consultation for predator reduction
 - Info packages &/or portal information sent to Nations last week
 - Any questions? Email Loni Loni.Arman@gov.bc.ca

South Columbia and Frisby-Boulder-Queest herds

- Corey Bird – these 2 herds are now functionally extirpated
- What is appropriate to do with these herds? Options?
 - Leave them?
 - Translocate them? Good success with Revelstoke pen animals – so translocation could potentially work. Aaron noted some difficulties, but South Selkirks cow is doing well. The “soft release” technique does work – could offset the risk of capturing the animals. One of the keys of success was putting resident cow in the pen with the transplants to bond with them
 - Conservation breeding? Doesn't look like it will get off the ground in time for these animals' genetics to be used
- Corey – how to best make use of these animals, if there is desire to do so, versus putting the money & effort towards other herds that need it too. Hopefully the animals from these herds are still of breeding age. It's not a massive recovery effort and every caribou counts.
- Leo: Columbia North pen?
 - Yes, would be ideal, though it needs some maintenance.
 - But we have a pen in Nakusp now.

- Any option could work, but need to discuss with Splatsin, form a committee
- Genevieve: What is the risk to the animals if they remain? Extinction
- Tim: Caribou Conservation Breeding Foundation. Good time to get this going. Tim is a Board member. No decisions, just feeling out how it will work for Shuswap Band. Akisq̓nuk Band also involved. Looking to govt to get approval to move forward; will be making presentations shortly.
- Genevieve: What's the process if we decided to move them?
 - Leo: this group's support, Parks Canada, BC govt executive. Where would they go? Just cows or both?
- Corey – talks with Chief and Council happening in near future
- Aaron – strong support from Kalispell and Kootenay to move US animals – so would need similar strong support
- Tina: Simpcw – caribou are important, but community rely on deer, moose for food (no caribou). Always a balancing act. Grizzly bear study coming up. Five directives that they follow.
- Robin Steenweg – can these animals be the locals for the maternal pen or conservation breeding animals? What are the ramifications for other things if the animals are removed – forestry, recreation?
 - These are desired animals for foundation stock for conservation breeding (reduces impact to other herds as well). Would be 2-5 years out, minimum. Risk of losing animals in the meantime. Predator reduction is why these animals are still there.
 - Could relocate them in the meantime, and recapture these animals again (they would be marked) – but there's a risk in every capture
 - Recreation needs to be added to agenda for these herds. Recreation closures in place, but still lots of areas where snowmobiling happens. Could move them around to best suit caribou
 - Forestry: habitat issues are big. Assume caribou in area, even if extirpated, but for how long?
- Robyn – not just how can we use these animals but help them.
- Aaron – timelines are critical. Take time to implement. Needs to have discussion. Keep in mind that there likely won't be as many animals next year
- **ACTION: Aaron Reid and Corey Bird to gather materials for discussion of what the best options are for the South Columbia and Frisby-Boulder herds for next meeting**
- **ACTION: Genevieve: if Aaron and Corey can get materials together for group, then Genevieve will put this on the agenda for next month for discussion, and potential decision.**

Roundtable

- Aaron Deans – provincial communications budget – strategy. Where is this at? Need more public awareness of predator reduction, etc. How is it being implemented?
 - Leo: public communications – led by our communications branch (GCPE). Their budget is unknown. The caribou recovery program doesn't have a separate communication budget.
 - **ACTION: Leo to research answer on communications strategy and budget, and report back**
 - **ACTION: Genevieve to add communications strategy and budget to agenda for next meeting**

- Leo: we have an engagement team that lead specific engagement processes, which are part of communications/
 - Aaron: Holistic and strategic implementation of communications? Important to raise public awareness! Not setting ourselves up for success if we aren't doing this – no public support
- Corey – would like more info on what's happening behind the scenes on conservation breeding. Also, heli cat BMP/MOU expired - updates?
 - Leo – heli ski BMPs – Darcy is most involved. Working to increase separation distances between caribou and helicopter and skiing. 500m for helicopter, none for skiing previously. New: 2 km, plus the flight GPS data, to hold them accountable to the separation distances. Some operators are resistant. Darcy will know if further consultation is upcoming.
 - **ACTION: Darcy to provide heli ski update next meeting.**
 - Tim: Dave Butler, heli ski contractor working with Shuswap, can talk to group.
- Leo – actively working on closures – initiating these in Peace River area
- Bevan – trying to move forward on all the topics discussed here. Not always as far as we want, but some good news: 10% growth in Groundhog, couple of % in Wells Grey, Columbia North – doing well in the Columbia North confines, moving out of area. Still need to push for better. Hard push for habitat protections internally in government. More support, the more likely we'll get those protections in place
- Deb MacKillop – Old Growth Planning under existing orders. Could do a review of land use orders work for old growth and caribou at October 18th meeting. Working on highest priority areas for old growth deferrals – materials should be available by Oct 18. Can discuss overlaps, science behind it.
 - **ACTION: Genevieve to add Deb MacKillop old growth update to October 18th meeting**
- Robin Steenweg – planning on next round of engagement on federal recovery strategy. Everyone should have received the invitation over the summer. Language update table, better inclusion of indigenous knowledge and perspective, and critical habitat designation. Federal funding available, like AFSAR (Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk) but also directed funding for caribou (no public notice).
 - **ACTION: If there are caribou-specific projects led by Nations, please reach out to Robin. Robin.Steenwag@ec.gc.ca**
 - **ACTION: Genevieve to add funding to next agenda (Robin or Agathe)**
- Tim: next steps to creating the Caribou Breeding Foundation? Would like to have it going in 2 years. Has excellent location, just matter if getting things in place.
 - Louisiana Pacific logging in caribou habitat – needs pre- and post-logging site visits.
 - Has govt reached desired moose numbers?
 - Robin Steenweg invited Tim to reach out and continue conversation

TOR, timeline-workplan, contribution agreement

- **ACTION: Genevieve to set up meeting with indigenous communities to move forward with TOR, Workplan and Contribution Agreement before next meeting (rather than take time today)**

ACTION ITEMS

- **Genevieve** to add restoration to next agenda
- **Aaron Reid and Corey Bird** to get materials for discussion of what the best options are for the South Columbia and Frisby-Boulder herds for next meeting
- **Genevieve:** if Aaron can get materials together for group, then Genevieve will put this on the agenda for next month for discussion, and potential decision.
- **Leo** to research answer on communications strategy and budget, and report back
- **Genevieve** to add communications strategy and budget to agenda for next meeting
- **Darcy** to provide heli ski update next meeting.
- **Genevieve** to add Deb MacKillop old growth update to October 18th meeting
- **Group:** If there are caribou-specific projects led by Nations, please reach out to Robin.
Robin.Steenwag@ec.gc.ca
- **Genevieve** to add funding to next agenda (Robin or Agathe)
- **Genevieve** to set up meeting with indigenous communities to move forward with TOR, Workplan and Contribution Agreement before next meeting
- **Next meeting October 18th 1:15- 4:00pm**