



Release Date: February 14, 2006

Senseless Slaughter of Wolves Underway in Little Smoky

Thirty-four wolves have been shot and killed so far in the Little Smoky area under the authorization of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD). The wolf kill is being undertaken as part of SRD's Woodland caribou recovery process in one of Alberta's most threatened herds. The wolf kill does not have the endorsement of the Alberta Caribou Committee. Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) has repeatedly opposed the culling of wolves without a moratorium or deferral of industrial activity in the Little Smoky.

"The strategy to kill wolves to save caribou is senseless without industrial activity being put on hold at the same time," says Cliff Wallis, an ACC member and past-president of the AWA. "It makes even less sense that Alberta, as recently as three weeks ago, continues to sell off critical caribou habitat to the oil and gas industry. First it was the Woodland caribou and Grizzly bear that suffered in the rush to extract natural resources but now wolves are also feeling the pain of Alberta's greed."

SRD, using aircraft, have killed 34 of 70 targeted wolves, but in January of this year, the Alberta Government sold oil and gas leases totaling an estimated 94.72 km² in and immediately adjacent to Little Smoky caribou herd habitat. The Little Smoky region borders Jasper National Park and Willmore Wilderness Park.

The province's Alberta Woodland Caribou Recovery Plan states that the reason for the decline in Alberta's caribou population is industrial activity and resulting habitat loss, fragmentation, or alteration. Predator control was identified as a last resort in the report from the Caribou Workshops in April 2005, which also stated that predation risk increases with habitat loss.

The provincial government's position appears confusing and contradictory. SRD Minister David Coumts stated in March 2005 that SRD "is very concerned about the status of Woodland Caribou throughout Alberta, and particularly the Little Smoky herd." This statement was followed by one he made in the Alberta Legislature in November 2005: "We're promoting industry best practices more widely so that companies can operate in all caribou ranges."

Despite the Alberta Government's stated concerns for Woodland caribou and habitat, the actions taken support industrial activity anywhere and at any cost, including killing wolves. The best course of action would be to implement a moratorium on industrial activity as recommended by the Alberta Woodland Caribou Recovery Plan, and allow the ACC to complete its work towards planning the recovery of Woodland caribou in Alberta.

For more information please contact:

David Samson, AWA Conservation Specialist: (403) 283 2025

Cliff Wallis, AWA Past-President: (403) 271 1408

