

# A Woodland Caribou Policy for Alberta



## ***Policy Statement***

**The Government of Alberta is committed to achieving naturally sustaining woodland caribou populations.**

Stabilizing, recovering and sustaining woodland caribou populations is an investment in maintaining Alberta's diverse natural environment. Successfully achieving this result will require the identification, maintenance and restoration of sufficient caribou habitat.

Caribou conservation is a shared government, public and private sector responsibility, led by government. A comprehensive, integrated partnership approach is needed to commit financial and other resources, in a manner which maximizes their effectiveness.

Immediate action is required to ensure the long-term presence of naturally thriving woodland caribou populations in Alberta. Implementation and associated land-use planning should provide certainty to industry and secure a broad range of environmental values. The implementation of this policy reflects our social licence and obligation to effectively conserve and manage our natural resources.

## ***Policy Parameters***

### **Conservation Focus**

Efforts will be undertaken to stabilize, recover and sustain woodland caribou populations in Alberta. Actions will be undertaken to address caribou habitat needs, including achievement of these requirements in land-use planning and approvals. Areas within caribou ranges will be identified and established where caribou conservation is the highest land management priority and other activities/uses minimized. Adjacent provincial, territorial and federal jurisdictions will be engaged to support effective management of caribou populations.

- Maintaining caribou habitat is the immediate priority.
- Restoring disturbed habitat is a critical component of caribou habitat management.
- Management efforts will recognize habitat changes naturally in type and location over time.
- Prudent management of the land base and associated development will be required to reduce the impact on and facilitate the restoration of caribou habitat.
- Effective management of wildlife populations (e.g., predators and other prey species) will be required.

# Policy Implementation

## Interpretation and Considerations

Within the context of sustaining Alberta's caribou populations, planning and implementation will consider:

- Provincial and federal legislative requirements;
- First Nations rights and traditional uses;
- Social/economic impacts; and
- Stakeholder interests.

Conservation tools to be considered include, but are not limited to; legislated and non-legislated designated areas, deferrals of development activities, conservation offsets, caribou habitat restoration, and predator and prey management.

Planning will focus at the caribou range level and consider all available information, including local knowledge and circumstances. Each range will require a prescription of management actions.

- Establish range-specific caribou population and habitat objectives and specific measurable targets.
- Determine the required mix of management activities, in accordance with local opportunities and constraints.
- Where applicable, pursue cross-jurisdictional engagement and implementation.

## Implementation will:

- Incorporate immediate and long-term actions;
- Include resources dedicated to ongoing caribou management efforts (e.g., caribou population and habitat monitoring, predator management and habitat restoration) and initiatives that benefit caribou management (e.g., critical habitat retention and effective mitigation of industrial activities);
- Apply different types and levels of management actions within individual ranges, as required, in order to deliver effective overall management;
- Potentially vary between caribou ranges in the type and level of actions taken;
- Have both spatial and temporal components;
- Use adaptive management to:
  - Evaluate success through monitoring caribou populations and habitats, including the success of caribou habitat restoration;
    - > Are we doing what we should be doing?
    - > Are actions having the desired effect?
  - Adjust management approaches when required;
  - Regularly review and enhance the policy; and
- Increase awareness of caribou population status and associated conservation strategies.

A schedule for planning and implementing actions will be developed.

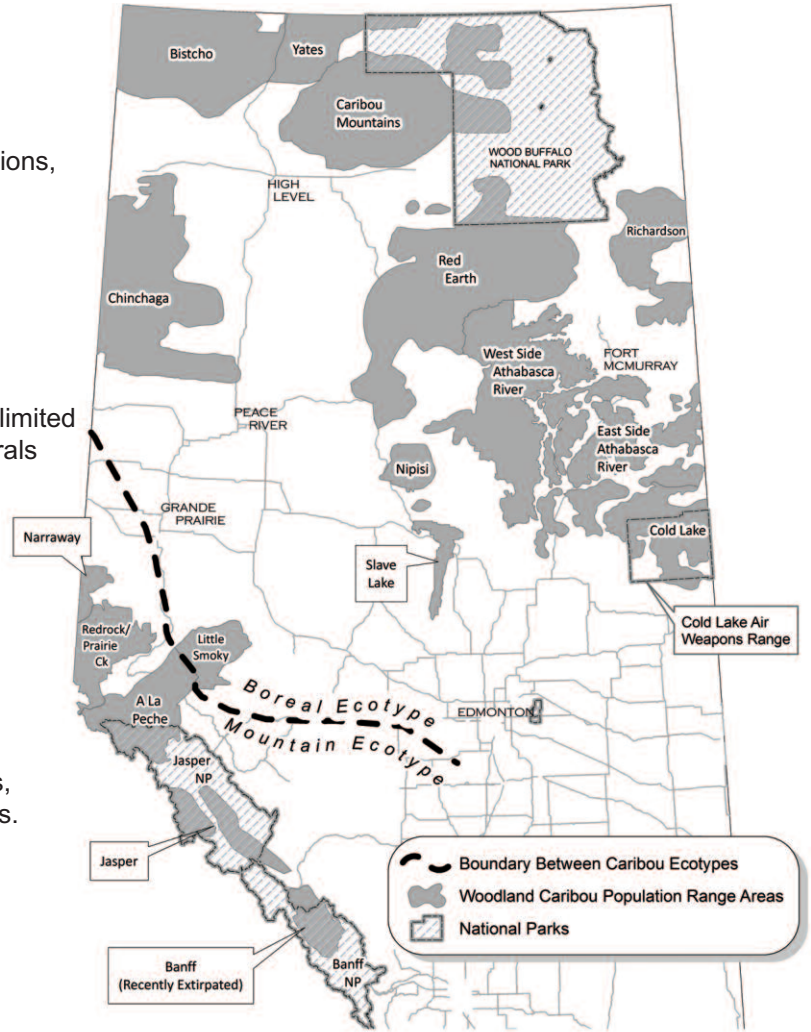


Figure 1. Woodland caribou population names and current range areas in Alberta.

