

**From:** Alberta Wilderness Association [mailto:Alberta\_Wilderness\_Association@mail.vresp.com]  
**Sent:** May-24-13 8:16 AM  
**Subject:** AWA Wilderness & Wildlife Defenders: Little Smoky Caribou Thanks and Next Steps



Alberta Wilderness Association

May 24, 2013



**Dear Wilderness Defender,**

You have made a difference! In early May, the Alberta government deferred new mineral rights sales in the Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou ranges north of Jasper Park! Please take a minute to thank Ministers McQueen and Hughes and press them for the next on-the-ground habitat steps needed for these caribou to survive.

- Carolyn Campbell, AWA Conservation Specialist

**In This Issue:**

Thanks, and Next Steps Needed for Little Smoky and A La Peche Caribou

AWA

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**The Issue**

The Alberta government's decision to halt mineral rights sales in Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou ranges until completion of habitat recovery range plans is an important step forward for the survival chances of these two populations. To complement that decision, logging plan approvals need to be deferred, and existing energy leases need to be managed to maintain and restore habitat.

**Background**

Alberta committed on May 2, 2013 to defer new mineral rights sales across the ranges of the Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou, two of fifteen caribou populations on provincial lands, until Cabinet first adopts range plans. These caribou ranges are in west central Alberta, north of Jasper Park. Alberta's department of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) will develop the range plans.

This is the first time energy leasing has been halted across entire caribou ranges ahead of a recovery plan. AWA praised this step in a news release that was widely carried in provincial and national news outlets.

According to Environment Canada, the Little Smoky caribou range is 95% disturbed, yet all caribou populations need at least 65% undisturbed habitat to be self-sustaining.

Forestry-related disturbance continues to be a significant source of habitat loss for Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou. To be consistent with deferral of new mineral rights sales, it's very important for logging plan approvals to be deferred as well. Alberta also needs to require holders of existing energy leases to maintain and restore caribou habitat in these areas.

Link to AWA's Letters of 'Thanks and Requested Next Steps':

- [to ESRD Minister McQueen, May 8, 2013](#)
- [to Energy Minister Hughes, May 7, 2013](#)

**Take Action**

Please take a moment to send a joint note to Alberta ESRD Minister Diana McQueen and Energy Minister Ken Hughes with these main points:

- thanking the Alberta government for deferring new energy leasing in Little Smoky and A La Peche until habitat recovery range plans are adopted by Cabinet;
- urging logging plan approvals in these ranges be deferred to be consistent with this decision;
- requesting existing mineral rights in these ranges be proved and developed with 'no new surface disturbance' of caribou habitat, e.g. through trackless seismic and with horizontal drilling from clustered well pads located outside intact or restored

habitat;  
- identifying and conducting highest-impact reforestation/restoration work in caribou habitat.

Hon. Diana McQueen  
Alberta Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development  
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Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6  
[Esrd.minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Esrd.minister@gov.ab.ca)

Hon. Ken Hughes  
Alberta Minister of Energy  
#404 Legislature Building  
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And please send us a copy at [ccampbell@abwild.ca](mailto:ccampbell@abwild.ca).

Thanks for Taking Action for Alberta Caribou!

***Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action***