

From: Alberta Wilderness Association [mailto:Alberta_Wilderness_Association@mail.vresp.com]
Sent: May-22-14 10:25 AM
To:
Subject: AWA Wilderness & Wildlife Defenders: Stop Leasing in Endangered Caribou Habitat



Alberta Wilderness Association

May 22, 2014



Dear Wilderness Defender,

The Alberta government plans to sell new energy leases in endangered mountain caribou ranges. Last week, the Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal editorial boards plus all opposition parties called for a halt to this leasing. I am hoping that you can help: please ask Alberta's Energy and ESRD Ministers to halt new lease sales and commit to range plans that protect remaining habitat and restore the forests the caribou need to survive.

- Carolyn Campbell, AWA Conservation Specialist

In This Issue:

Help Stop New Energy Leasing in Endangered Mountain Caribou Ranges

AWA

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The Issue

Recovery of Alberta's mountain caribou populations is technically and biologically feasible, according to scientists. But Alberta's planned sales of 1700 hectares (17 km²) of oil and gas leases in the Narraway and Redrock Prairie-Creek caribou ranges will destroy more of these endangered animals' habitat, and should be halted. For these caribou to survive, it is urgent that Alberta's ineffective guidelines be replaced with rules that prevent new disturbance and extensively restore caribou habitat.

Background

Alberta's mountain caribou live in the Rocky Mountains in summer and the foothills in winter. Their foothills habitat is not protected and already has industry disturbance far beyond what they can tolerate. Caribou have co-existed with forest fires and wolves for thousands of years, but human alteration of caribou habitat causes unsustainable predation. Energy and forestry industries create young forest that boosts deer, moose and elk populations, which draws in wolves. Industry footprint also opens easy access for predators to reach caribou.

Caribou populations of 300 animals with connected ranges are likely self-sustaining, but the Narraway caribou herd is only 95 animals, and Redrock-Prairie Creek about 125 animals. Ranges should be at least 65% *undisturbed* for caribou to be self-sustaining, but by 2010 the Narraway range was already 80% disturbed and the Redrock-Prairie Creek range was 50% disturbed (this is the latest publicly available data). In early May 2014, Canada's *Species at Risk Act* scientist advisors assessed these mountain caribou as *Endangered*, that is,

at immediate risk of extinction.



To its credit, last year Alberta halted energy lease sales in the Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou ranges until range plans are developed, yet it continues to sell leases in the endangered Narraway and Redrock-Prairie Creek ranges. 800 hectares of sales are planned for May 28, and a further 900 hectares in June and early July. Current operating rules slightly delay new disturbance, but continue to allow a growing industry footprint. Directional drilling and financial pooling of leases could allow significant oil and gas extraction while maintaining and restoring habitat.

Last week, the Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal editorial boards plus all opposition parties called for a halt to this leasing, but Alberta Energy has stated that they will not stop.

Take Action

Please write Alberta's Energy Minister and copy the Environment and Sustainable Resource Minister asking them to:
Stop new energy leasing in endangered mountain caribou ranges
Put rules in place to maintain intact caribou habitat and extensively restore disturbed habitat, before these caribou disappear from Alberta's mountains and foothills

Please write:
Hon. Diana McQueen
Alberta Energy Minister
minister.energy@gov.ab.ca

Hon. Robin Campbell
Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Minister
ESRD.Minister@gov.ab.ca

And please copy AWA at ccampbell@abwild.ca

Thanks for taking action for endangered caribou!

Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action

If you wish to sign up for the Wilderness and Wildlife Defenders mailing list, please use the form on this page:
www.albertawilderness.ca/Act-Now