

# **New forest certification standard promises better protection for woodland caribou**

*June 3, 2019*



Today, the Forest Stewardship Council of Canada (FSC Canada) released a new FSC Standard that will guide Canada's forestry sector. FSC Canada aims to incorporate sustainability into responsible forest management. Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) congratulates FSC for developing a progressive national standard that incorporates conservation measures for species at risk, including a habitat indicator for endangered woodland caribou.

"We are encouraged to see that FSC Canada considered sound science and Indigenous knowledge as the basis of their approach to protecting endangered woodland caribou," said Carolyn Campbell, AWA Conservation Specialist. "The proposed SARA-compliant caribou range planning included in the new Standard is a step forward for supporting species at risk in the boreal forest

where no protection currently exists.”

Woodland caribou are federally-listed as endangered under Canada’s *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), with habitat loss and fragmentation among the primary causes of population decline. With the implementation of the revised FSC Standard for Canada, FSC-certified companies may play an important role in caribou range protection where provincial range plans have not yet materialized.

“The work has barely begun for managing Canada’s woodland caribou,” continues Carolyn. “We have some concern about giving certificate holders this degree of responsibility. However, this is potentially the most progress that forest certification has seen for a woodland caribou indicator.”

“FSC Canada has been a leader in placing conservation, Free, Prior and Informed Consent for Indigenous Peoples, and species protection at the core of sustainable forest management,” adds Cliff Wallis, AWA Board member. “The standard stems from the opportunities for dialog and consultation created by FSC Canada.”

AWA is hopeful that the new national standard will increase conservation efforts in the forestry sector in such a way that benefits of communities, economies and, importantly, forest ecosystems.

Read the new FSC Standard for Canada here: <https://ca.fsc.org/en-ca/standards/new-national-forest-management-standard>

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Dedicated to the conservation of wilderness and completion of a protected areas network, AWA inspires communities to care for Alberta’s wild spaces through awareness and action.

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