

## ADVICE TO MINISTER

**CONFIDENTIAL  
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture  
Date: Feb. 9, 2019, updated July 8, 2019  
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

# **Adventure Tourism – Caribou Recovery Impacts**

### **ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **B.C.'s Woodland Caribou population has seen a significant decline in recent decades.**
- **As part of the Provincial Caribou Recovery Program, our government has been working with First Nations, the federal government and key stakeholders on initiatives to aid in the recovery of the species.**
- **The Province has recently completed a public engagement process in which the tourism sector, had an opportunity to provide feedback, voice concerns and ask questions.**
- **I have met with the adventure tourism sector as have my colleagues at Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development. I know they're concerned with how caribou recovery efforts could affect business - and the tourism industry in general. Further consultation for this industry is planned.**
- **I also know the industry takes environmental stewardship very seriously and the Province's new tourism strategic framework is built on a foundation of sustainability both for the environment and businesses.**
- **I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure that we coordinate our efforts to recover our caribou herds and protect local jobs and businesses.**

s.13; s.21

FLNRO is leading an engagement process that started the week of March 18th. The tourism sector is fully aware and engaged. On April 15, 2019, Premier John Horgan extended the consultation period by a month, citing the need for greater public engagement and appointing Blair Lekstrom as community liaison. The community consultation period was extended until May 31st. No further community engagement sessions being added with deadline extension, but small direct engagement to continue, including with adventure tourism groups as needed. Blair Lekstrom and Big River Analytics' work will focus on the Partnership Agreement, not section 11. Tourism will be part of the socioeconomic impact study to be done for the Partnership Agreement. For the section 11 agreement, each herd management plan (and the options available within each plan) will inform the decision as to whether a socioeconomic impact study is needed.

While the Partnership Agreement proposes protections that will limit industrial development in critical caribou habitat, it does not commit to specific snowmobile closures. However, the provincial Caribou Recovery Program does support prioritizing closures in areas that are prioritized for caribou recovery.

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, Government announced the implementation of an interim moratorium on new resource development in parts of northeastern B.C. and further engagement with affected communities and industries on long-term caribou protection strategies. This is one of the 14 recommendations included in

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the Lekstrom report, which has now been publicly released. At this time, Government also announced its intention to sign the Southern Mountain Caribou Bilateral Conservation Agreement (Section 11).

Snowmobiling-specific consultations will take place later in 2019. Consultation will focus on identifying key areas and trails that are important to snowmobilers and to discuss what makes those places important to them. There will also be an opportunity to discuss areas where snowmobiling infrastructure could be enhanced or where snowmobiling could be re-directed to maintain recreational opportunities while reducing impacts on caribou. If any closure is implemented, it will consider the best scientific information combined with feedback and information received from the public engagement process, and could be implemented for the 2020 season.

Snowmobile activity is the only recreational activity expected to be impacted in the Central Group area at this time given the disruption snowmobiles pose to caribou. Significant portions of this area have recreational vehicle restrictions above 1,400m already.

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Communications:	Lisa Pilling – TAC GCPE	250-952-2928
Program:	Vincent Portal, Director	778-698-1801
<b>Approvals (initials only)</b>		
Program ED	ADM/DM	CD
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