

Project Profile

Project Name:	Peace Northern Caribou Plan (PNCP) Projects
Project Number:	BCIP-2017-02
Proponent:	Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Funding Envelope:	Boreal Caribou
Timeframe:	October 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017

Project objectives

The objective of the population management initiatives are:

- a. To increase the population of South Peace Northern Caribou herds.
- b. A secondary objective is to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of the various management actions, and the direct and indirect impacts of those actions, so that limited resources can be directed appropriately.
- c. To encourage collaboration with First Nations communities in wildlife management.

Project description

At this time, there are three distinct population management initiatives:

- a. Maternal Pen – This project involves the aerial net gunning and capture of pregnant female caribou, transport to the penning site, the operation and maintenance of the pen until the calves are old enough to be released. The project is led by West Moberly and Sauleau First Nations, with technical and administrative support from Wildlife Infometrics.
- b. Supplemental Feeding – The Kennedy Siding herd is provided supplemental feed in the autumn, which is thought to increase the overall health and resilience of the animals throughout winter when resources are scarce. The animals are weighed and photographed while at the feeding station, providing highly valuable monitoring data. The project is undertaken in collaboration with McLeod Lake Indian Band.
- c. Predator-prey dynamics research and effectiveness monitoring – The project is focused on understanding the effectiveness of reducing the impact of predation rates when combined with multiple management actions, including mortality investigations and population data collection and analysis. This work is undertaken in collaboration with First Nations in the region.

Project approach

The PNCP established a balanced approach, incorporating regulatory and non-regulatory actions, to be implemented by government and industry, with the support of First Nations and informed by science. The population management initiatives are intended to provide direct and immediate support to the South Peace Northern Caribou to strengthen the existing animals, enhance the likelihood of calf survival, and reduce immediate threats. Some emergency short term measures are required, while the longer term measures take effect.

The population estimates for South Peace Northern Caribou are critically low and continuing to decline. Given the very low numbers, and greatly diminished ability to be self-sustaining, a multi-faceted approach is required (and supported by wildlife biologists). The three population management initiatives are also complimentary, with each initiative improving the likelihood of success of the others.

Project deliverables

The deliverables from this project include the following:

- Summary reports and monitoring data for each of the three population management initiatives.
- Increased capacity in First Nations communities in caribou recovery and management.
- Final report.