

TFL 23
Caribou Assessment Report

FERGUSON

Block(s): 1

Submitted to:
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BACKGROUND

CP: 409

AREA: Ferguson

MAP: see Figure 1

Description

This proposed 53.9-hectare cutblock is in the ICHwk1 biogeoclimatic variant.

PEM-based caribou habitat suitability mapping rates this area as moderately high for early winter (WE) and spring (P), moderate for summer fall (SF), and late winter (LW). (Hamilton and Wilson 2002).



Caribou telemetry point locations identified early winter caribou use to the south of the survey area in Broadview Creek, as well as late winter and summer fall locations along the ridgeline above and to the west of the proposed block. Spring locations have been recorded along Ferguson creek upstream of the proposed block.

Caribou management strategy for TFL23 (LUP Working Group 2002) identifies this development area as a caribou special management zone (zone 2). A caribou connectivity zone (zone1) is mapped along the ridgeline to the west of the survey area.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Reconnaissance-level Survey

Doug Seaton observed caribou tracks indicating heavy use along the old mining trail and along Ferguson creek to the east of the proposed block on August 29, 2002, as well as June 16, 2003. Access was by ATV.

No evidence of caribou use was observed while walking along the old road leading to the south edge of the proposed cutblock on June 12, 2003. Field comments are summarized in Appendix I, a satellite image field map is illustrated in Appendix II, caribou habitat assessments were conducted using Wildlife Habitat Assessment field forms (FS882 (5) HRE 98/5; Appendix III), and PEM-based habitat mapping results are illustrated in Appendix IV. Arboreal lichen abundance was estimated according to Armleder et al (1992).

Elk and deer tracks were observed along Broadview road to the south west of the proposed block.

No additional reconnaissance-level surveys have been completed in this planning unit.

Stand-level Surveys

Block 1

Doug Seaton conducted a stand-level survey of the proposed cutblock on June 12 and 16, 2003. Access was by foot.

Dennis Hamilton, Doug Seaton and Cameron Leitch conducted a stand level survey of the northwest portion of the proposed block on September 9, 2003. Access was 4X4 and foot.

Evidence of Use:

No evidence of use by caribou was found in the lower east, steep portion of the proposed block.

Evidence of yearly caribou use (tracks, scat) was observed during a traverse along the upper west boundary of the proposed block

The lady fern and other vegetation on the forest floor is trampled by frequent daily feeding and travel by caribou in the north west top corner of this block. A well-used caribou trail leads from here to the clearcut above where vegetation is abundant and the new growth provides cover (security). Caribou scat and tracks are abundant along this trail as well as through the old clearcut above.

Habitat Evaluation:

Field habitat ratings are high for spring and summer/fall, moderate early winter and low for late winter. PEM-based caribou habitat suitability mapping rates this area as moderately high for early winter and spring and moderate for summer fall and late winter.

The trees through the lower east half of this block support lichen class 1-2 (95% *Alectoria spp.*). This portion of the block is steep (45 – 85 % slope). This steep terrain effectively steps down the caribou habitat ratings to low for all seasons in the lower half of the proposed block.

The large cedar and hemlock through the top portion of the proposed block support lichen class 3 (95 % *Alectoria spp.*). The abundant herbaceous vegetation covering the forest floor provides a food source during the spring and summer /fall. Current caribou use, as well as older (2years +) sign is abundant along the top west boundary.

Other Species:

Bear and deer sign (tracks and scat) was observed through the lower south half of this block. Two faint game trails lead from the proposed cutblock to the openings along the south boundary.

Recommendations

Block 1

Leave trees intact between the old mining trail and Ferguson creek (east block boundary).

Retain a RBA of 20 – 24 square meters per hectare in approximate uniform distribution above and to the west of the proposed road, as well as through the south portion of the block (south of proposed branch 25).

Retain groups of trees throughout the remaining steep north -east portion of the block to facilitate lichen inoculation. Spacing of groups should be 50 – 100 meters with 10 - 20 trees in each group.

References Cited

- Armleder, H.M., S. Stevenson, and S.D. Walker. 1992. Estimating the Abundance of Arboreal Forage Lichens. Land Management Handbook Field Guide Insert 7. Ministry of Forests, Research Program, Victoria, BC.
- Hamilton, D., and S.F. Wilson. 2002. Central Selkirk Mountain Caribou Habitat Use and Species-habitat Model for TFL23. Prepared for Pope & Talbot, Nakusp, BC.
- LUP (Landscape Unit Planning) Working Group. 2002. Caribou Management in TFL#23: Agreement for District-Level Implementation Issues. Prepared for Arrow Forest District, Castlegar, BC.

List of Appendices

- Appendix I: Field Comments
- Appendix II: Map
- Appendix III: WHA field cards
- Appendix IV: PEM Based Caribou Habitat Ratings

Appendix I: Field Comments

<u>COMMENTS</u> Supplemental Field Form for TFL#23 Caribou Assessment			
To be used in conjunction with the WHA and GIF field forms and PU field map			
COMMENTS (Reference No. to also be located on Field Map)			
Reference No.	Lat/North	Long/East	COMMENTS
1			WHA plot, low lichen loading, poor EW and LW habitat
2			WHA plot, Lichen load class 3 (95% alectoria), lush herbaceous forest floor. Recent caribou use.
3			Mule deer / bear trail, daily use from proposed block to the clearcut to the south.
4			Elk and deer sign.
5			Field confirmed seasonal travel corridor
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12			

Appendix II: Map

Appendix III: WHA field cards

Appendix IV: PEM Based Caribou Habitat Ratings