

TFL 23

Caribou Assessment Report

FINKLE CREEK

Block(s): 1

Submitted to:

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BACKGROUND

Planning Unit

CP 569

AREA: Finkle Creek

MAP: see Figure 1

Description

This proposed cutblock is transitional from the ICHwk1 to the ESSFwc1 biogeoclimatic variant.

PEM-based caribou habitat suitability mapping rates this area as generally low for late winter and moderate for spring, summer fall and early winter. (Hamilton and Wilson 2002) 

Caribou telemetry point locations identified summer/fall and early winter caribou use along the lower ridgelines to the east and west of the proposed block. No late winter locations have been recorded close to this block.

Caribou management strategy for TFL23 (LUP Working Group 2002) identifies that this block is within the mapped caribou special management zone (Zone 2).

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Reconnaissance-level Survey

Doug Seaton conducted a field reconnaissance-level survey of the ridgeline above Union Jack creek, to the west of Finkle creek on July 7, 2003. Access was by ATV and foot. No evidence of caribou use is found along the old mining trail leading up the ridgeline to the west of Finkle creek. Caribou scat and tracks were observed along the ridgeline above and to the east of the old Union Jack mine site. No defined trails were encountered along this ridge. This stand of balsam supports good lichen, class 3 (95% *Bryoria spp.*).

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).

Doug Seaton and Andrew Alstad conducted a field reconnaissance-level survey of the ridgeline above and to the west of the proposed block on July 18, 2003. Access was by helicopter and foot. No evidence of use was observed along this ridge. Old caribou sign (tracks, scat) was observed above the west boundary of the block. Bear dens were observed in the slide chutes to the north of the proposed block.

Doug Seaton and Len Stratton conducted a field reconnaissance-level survey of the ridgeline above and to the east of Finkle creek on July 31, 2003. Access was by helicopter and foot. No evidence of caribou was observed along this ridge. The groups of balsam along the timberline have heavy lichen loading, class 5 (95% *Bryoria spp.*). Mountain Goat tracks were observed along the ridgeline above the timberline. Deer sign was observed along the tree line. Gladding for heli skiing through the old burn has left widely spaced trees. These remaining balsam trees have no lichen growing on them.

Evidence of moose browsing on mountain ash and some deer sign is evident through the ESSF - ICH transition below the burn. This stand has relatively low lichen loading. Caribou scat and tracks were found along wet seeps in the lateral gullies along this face to the east of the proposed development.

Stand-level Surveys

Block 1

Doug Seaton and Andrew Alstad conducted a stand-level survey of the proposed cutblock on July 18, 2003. Access was by helicopter and foot.

Evidence of Use:

No evidence of use by caribou was found in the area surveyed.

Habitat Evaluation:

PEM-based caribou habitat suitability mapping rates this area as generally low for late winter and moderate for spring, summer fall and early winter. Field observations rate this stand as low for late winter and moderate for spring and summer fall. The steep terrain (65%+) and low lichen loading, along with the lack of connection with suitable late winter habitat effectively step down the early winter habitat ratings to low in this block. The steep rocks on each side inhibit east west movement through this block. A strip of trees above and to the west of the north block boundary may provide a movement corridor. Any east – west movement through Finkle creek would likely occur through this strip of trees, or along the face to the south of the proposed block.

This block is a mix of large spruce, cedar fir and hemlock with lichen rating of class 2 (80% *Bryoria spp.*). Lush herbaceous vegetation covers the forest floor.

Other Species:

Bear and deer sign (tracks and scat) is found throughout this block.

Recommendations

Block 1

Maximize clump retention within the northwest portion of the block to facilitate lichen inoculation and provide security cover habitat. Spacing of groups should be a maximum of 75meters with 20+ trees in each group.

Retain strips of trees along each side of the NP strips through the northeast portion of the block.

Retain clumps of trees throughout the remainder of the block to facilitate lichen inoculation. Spacing of groups should be 50 – 150 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

COMMENTS 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			No evidence of ungulate use along ridgeline
2			Bear den
3			Fresh goat tracks, no caribou sign
4			Deer sign along timber above burn, lichen class 5 (95% <i>Bryoria spp.</i>)
5			Very dry, no lichen through old burn
6			Moose / deer sign. Caribou sign (tracks, scat, feeding) in wet seep.
7			Lush undergrowth, low lichen, steep, bear sign
8			Lichen class 3 (80% <i>Alectoria spp.</i>) lush undergrowth
9			
10			
11			
12			

Appendix II: Map

Appendix III: WHA field cards

Appendix IV: PEM Based Caribou Habitat Ratings