

TFL 23

Caribou Assessment Report

PEAK

Block(s): 16 and 18

Submitted to:

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BACKGROUND

Planning Unit

CP 583

AREA: Peak

MAP: see Figure 1

Description

Both proposed cutblocks are transitional between the ICHwk1 and ESSFwc1 biogeoclimatic variants.

PEM-based caribou habitat suitability mapping rates this area as moderate for all seasons (Hamilton and Wilson 2002).



Caribou telemetry point locations identified early winter caribou use in both of the proposed blocks as well as to the north in the top basin of Pollman creek.

Caribou management strategy for TFL23 (LUP Working Group 2002) identifies that the proposed blocks are within the mapped caribou special management zone (Zone 2). Both blocks border a caribou connectivity zone (zone1) on the north / east side.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Reconnaissance-level Survey

Doug Seaton and Andrew Alstad conducted a field reconnaissance-level survey of the ridgeline above and to the north of block 18 on September 24, 2003. Access was by helicopter and foot.

The late winter habitat above the proposed blocks has been extensively burnt in 2003. No evidence of recent use or well-established trails were encountered.

PEM-based caribou habitat suitability ratings are consistent with field ratings of high for the early winter habitat immediately north of block 18.

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).

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

Stand-level Surveys

Block 18

Doug Seaton and Andrew Alstad conducted a stand-level survey of the proposed cutblock on September 24, 2003. Access was by helicopter and foot.

Evidence of Use:

No evidence of use by caribou was found in the area surveyed. Recent disturbance by elk and deer through the block make observation of caribou sign difficult.

Habitat Evaluation:

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

This stand supports class 2 lichen (95% *Alectoria spp.*) and has lush herbaceous vegetation with tall spruce and alder patches.

Other Species:

The alder patches and wet seeps throughout block 18 are used heavily by elk.

Block 16

Doug Seaton and Terry Seaton conducted a stand-level survey of the proposed cutblock on November 6, 2003. Access was by 4X4 and foot.

Evidence of Use:

A trail runs along the bottom of the alder patches about halfway up the block. Caribou sign is found along this trail. To the west of the alder patches the timber is transitional to balsam. Caribou scat is found along here.

Habitat Evaluation:

PEM-based caribou habitat suitability mapping rates this area as high for early winter and spring, and moderate for late winter and summer/fall. This is consistent with field ratings of high early winter, spring and summer/fall and moderate for late winter.

Average lichen loading in this stand is class 4 (75% *Bryoria spp.*).

The lower west quadrant of the proposed block has lower lichen loading than the remainder of the block. Lichen is available from ground level in the top half of the block.

Other Species:

Elk and deer sign is found through the alder patches in the upper east part of the proposed block. Elk sign is found along a trail running up along the western block boundary.

Recommendations

Block 18

Harvest in small groups (<0.5ha.) with a minimum of 66% area retention.

Block 16

Exclude the upper east portion of the block where alder patches are dominant from the harvest area.

Retain an RBA of 20-24 sq m / ha. in the upper west quadrant of the block

Locate the block boundary 50 meters east of the trail (gully) following along the lower western boundary.

Leave a green strip through the small Hw along the bottom edge of the block to provide cover for a movement corridor.

Retain groups of trees through the lower portion of the block for 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 field forms and PU field map			
COMMENTS (Reference No. to also be located on Field Map)			
Reference No.	Lat/North	Long/East	COMMENTS
1			Area is used extensively by elk
2			Old selective logging between the clearcut and alder patches
3			Alder patches with widely spaced spruce
4			ESSF transition, good WE habitat, lichen is available at ground level
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Appendix II: Map

Appendix III: WHA field cards

Appendix IV: PEM Based Caribou Habitat Ratings