

**TFL 23**

**Caribou Assessment Report**

**PEARSON CREEK**

**Block(s):** 13

**Submitted to:**

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## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Planning Unit***

CP 515

AREA: Pearson

MAP: see Figure 1

### ***Description***

This proposed cutblock is transitional between the ICHvk1 and ESSFwc1 biogeoclimatic variants.

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

Caribou telemetry point locations identified early winter caribou use above on the ridgeline to the south and also in the timber to the west of the proposed 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 and Andrew Alstad conducted a field reconnaissance-level survey of the ridgeline above and to the south of block 13 on September 23, 2003. Access was by helicopter and foot.

Evidence of caribou use (tracks, pellets) was observed along the ridgeline between Pearson and Hill creeks. A well-defined trail marks a high pass between the two drainages.

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).

The ridgeline above block 13 is steep and rocky. Evidence of mountain goat (beds tracks pellets) is found along the ridge.

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

## **Stand-level Surveys**

### **Block 13**

Doug Seaton and Andrew Alstad conducted a stand-level survey of the proposed cutblock on September 23, 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 moderate for early winter, late winter and spring, and moderately high for summer/fall. This block has steep terrain and is choked with alder and devils club. Coarse rubble and talus impede movement. Field habitat suitability ratings are low early winter and late winter, and medium low for spring and summer fall.

This widely spaced mixed forest supports lichen class 3 (50% *Alectoria spp.*). Lush herbaceous vegetation covers the rocky forest floor.

#### **Other Species:**

Bear sign (tracks, scat, feeding) was observed through the lower half of this block. A well-defined game trail traverses along the bottom north boundary of this block. Abundant elk sign is found along this trail.

## **Recommendations**

### **Block 13**

Retain clumps of trees within the proposed block to facilitate lichen inoculation. Groups should be 50 – 100 meters apart 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**

<b><u>COMMENTS</u></b> <b>Supplemental Field Form</b> <b>for</b> <b>TFL#23 Caribou Assessment</b>			
To be used in conjunction with the <b>WHA</b> field forms and <b>PU</b> field map			
<b>COMMENTS</b> (Reference No. to also be located on Field Map)			
<b>Reference No.</b>	<b>Lat/North</b>	<b>Long/East</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>1</b>			Mountain goat sign, beds and scat
<b>2</b>			Trail through high pass between Pearson and Hill creek
<b>3</b>			Game trail, abundant elk sign
<b>4</b>			
<b>5</b>			
<b>6</b>			
<b>7</b>			
<b>8</b>			
<b>9</b>			
<b>10</b>			
<b>11</b>			
<b>12</b>			

## **Appendix II: Map**

### **Appendix III: WHA field cards**

## **Appendix IV: PEM Based Caribou Habitat Ratings**