



NORTHWEST SPECIES AT RISK

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September 1, 2017

The Honorable Shannon Phillips  
Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks  
208 Legislature Building  
10800 – 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Phillips:

RE: **MINISTER PHILLIPS' RECENT VISIT TO HIGH LEVEL, ALBERTA**

**THE NORTHWEST SPECIES AT RISK COMMITTEE FINAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT FOR BOREAL WOODLAND  
CARIBOU POPULATION RECOVERY IN NORTHWEST ALBERTA**

Thank you for taking the time to visit our region this summer. The Northwest Species at Risk Committee (the NWSAR) welcomed the opportunity to meet with you in High Level to discuss the important work we have contributed on how best to recover boreal woodland caribou, in Northwest Alberta.

As you are aware, we submitted our draft recommendations report to the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada in late June, 2017; outlining the perspective of northwestern stakeholders on how best to both recover the caribou and to safeguard the future of northwestern communities – ensuring that the environment and economy go hand-in-hand. Our extensive 179-page recommendations report is the culmination



of over a year's worth of work – gathering scientific information, local public input and expert advice.

We were happy to hear numerous commitments through your public comments, many of which align with those our committee has been advocating for, including:

- That the province has not committed to any protected areas or parks – specifically, that there will be no new protected area or park designations identified within your draft caribou range plans for the NWSAR region;
- That the province will work with local stakeholders to create caribou range plans that are for the longer-term;
- The province will get the public's feedback on their draft caribou range plans before they finalize them;
- Any range plan will take an approach that ensures the environment and economy go hand-in-hand, ensuring Northwest Alberta communities continue to be viable;
- The province's plans will include socio-economic analysis to ensure the area's communities are protected;
- Forestry and oil and gas tenures, that are currently in place will remain; and
- The province also wants to avoid the Government of Canada implementing an emergency protection order for caribou, and instead wants to create effective range plans that considers local impacts – creating a solution that will avoid drastic measures imposed on the area, if the caribou are not recovered.

We very much value and appreciate your decision to not proceed with designating any kind of provincial park or protected area, as this could significantly impact our communities and Alberta's economy, and may not be the most effective way to protect the caribou in Northwest Alberta.

We look forward to actively participating in your government's upcoming engagement with the NWSAR region after your draft preliminary caribou range plans are released, and we look forward to further providing our knowledge on this topic.

As you are aware, certain approaches for caribou recovery could have significant impacts to the NWSAR region and we want to ensure we find



an appropriate, balanced approach to protecting the natural environment and our communities' socio-economic well-being. With an estimated \$1 billion of existing forestry activity and an approximate \$2.9 billion of oil and natural gas "established today" reserves, within the northwestern caribou ranges; we need to ensure we do not strand these resources now and in the future – for our sake and Alberta's.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Northwest Species at Risk Committee's final *Recommendations for Boreal Woodland Caribou Population Recovery in Northwest Alberta*. Thank you again for your visit. We look forward to reviewing your draft caribou range plans, and to receiving your response to our final report.

Yours Sincerely



Lisa Wardley  
Chair, Northwest Species at Risk Committee  
Deputy Reeve, Mackenzie County

cc: Honourable Margaret McCuaig-Boyd, MLA Dunvegan-Central  
Peace-Notley  
Debbie Jabbour, MLA Peace River  
Diana McQueen, Owner, DMC Consulting  
Northwest Species at Risk Committee

