



July 20, 2018

To: Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development

On behalf of: BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists), Conservation Northwest, Greenpeace, Harmony Foundation, Sierra Club BC, Wilderness Committee, Wildsight, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative

Dear Minister Donaldson,

Thank you for your June 21st 2018 reply to our organizations' April 24th 2018 letter to you. We hope this is the beginning of a direct dialogue as we have considerable knowledge of caribou in BC and together represent a significant constituency. We want to help BC succeed with caribou recovery.

Our organizations are sensitive to the fact that you have inherited a dire situation with respect to the state of caribou in British Columbia but we also know that the decisions made by this government will determine whether or not caribou recovery will be achieved in BC.

One major reason British Columbians elected this government was its commitment to lead and innovate on environmental concerns. But we remain exceedingly concerned that your government is allowing the ongoing destruction of critical habitat while recovery planning proceeds on a two-year timeline. The scientific consensus is clear that the only way to recover caribou is by setting aside sufficient critical habitat to meet the needs of existing and recovering populations. BC's continued intransigence on the habitat issue, including an apparent unwillingness to bring in interim protections while recovery planning proceeds, is unacceptable to us.

The lack of provincial commitment to habitat protection has led to continued government reliance on questionable band-aid measures, including predator kill programs and penning that do not address the root cause of caribou decline.

A thoughtful and collaborative planning process involving both decision-makers (the province and First Nations) and stakeholders such as our sector is critical to developing a coherent approach to caribou recovery. The way we have been engaged to date as stakeholders by the province - occasionally informed, but not actually consulted - has been inadequate and needs to change.

In your letter, you indicated your Ministry is using a "Structured Decision Making" tool for herd planning. We would like to better understand this methodology, your application of it, who will participate in the process, how long it will take, which herds will be examined, what outcomes you hope to obtain, and how they will be applied. Clearly we have many questions here that warrant robust dialogue.

Lastly, our organizations represent many thousand members of the public in BC and across Canada and these members are very concerned about the decline and extinction of BC's caribou. Therefore, we need to meet with you to address our ongoing concerns, the questions noted above on your new methodology for herd planning, and to discuss how we can contribute through meaningful, results-based dialogue. **We would like to have a small delegation representing our groups and our constituencies meet with you and Minister Heyman as soon as possible. If that is not possible, we are willing to meet with each of you separately.**

The next few months will be very important. As you know, at least two BC herds suffered functional extirpations this spring, while other herds are so small as to be facing the same fate. We need to engage in rapid problem-solving for any hope of caribou recovery. The federal government has found that southern mountain caribou in particular are facing an imminent threat to their recovery, and in order for BC to avoid an emergency order action to protect critical habitat must be taken now. We reiterate our request for an immediate moratorium on activities that cause further degradation and disturbance of habitat in caribou ranges, or that displace caribou from critical habitat.

Things can't continue as they have been. Our options are limited to either public campaigning pointing out government mismanagement or working through the issues with you in a collaborative manner. We certainly prefer to work collaboratively and await your reply.

Sincerely,



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BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists)



Joe Scott, International Programs Director  
Conservation Northwest



Eduardo Sousa, Senior Campaigner  
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Michael Bloomfield, Founder & Executive Director  
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Joe Foy, National Campaign Director  
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John Bergenske, Conservation Director  
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Candace Batycki, BC & Yukon Program Director  
Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative

cc.

Honourable Catherine McKenna, Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Honourable George Heyman, BC Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

*Other members of BC Environment and Land Use Committee:*

Honourable Scott Fraser, BC Minister for Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Honourable Michelle Mungall, BC Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

Honourable Claire Trevena, BC Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure

Honourable Lana Popham, BC Minister of Agriculture