

TELKWA CARIBOU RECOVERY 2017.02.01
TELKWA RECREATIONAL ACCESS MANAGEMENT
Report to Bulkley Valley Backpacker Members
from Dina Hanson, BVBS Rep to TRAM

Fourteen Bulkley Valley recreational groups sent delegates to the TRAM, which met from Dec 2015 to Sept, 2016. The intent was to create a proposal, directed to the Ministry (FLNRO), that would protect the Telkwa caribou herd, while, at the same time, allowing for some level of recreational activity. Subsequently, a scientific/expert panel of caribou biologists examined the TRAM's proposals, and drafted their position. Local biologists will now present the Ministry's proposal to members of all 14 recreational groups..AND YOU ARE INVITED.

Below is a summary of the TRAM and Science Panel's deliberations:

TRAM meetings, and recommendations, looked at:

- a) summer and winter recreation
- b) non-motorized and motorized recreation
- c) all the geographic areas of the Telkwa Mountains

The scientific panel of caribou biologists examined the TRAM proposals and created their recommendations, based on criteria of:

- a) protecting caribou
- b) allowing some recreation
- c) creating a fair balance for all recreation groups

The expert panel's recommendations regarding recreation were also based on maps and kernels showing the probability of caribou being in certain areas, at certain time.

Previously, compliance with restrictions was voluntary; this will no longer be the case, in part due to the fact that caribou are now protected under the Federal Species at Risk Act (SARA).

Scientists' recommendations are also based on seasonal timing of caribou-at-risk data:

- a) low risk to caribou: mid-July to mid-September (calves healthy; before fall rut)
- b) moderate risk: mid-September to mid-January (fall rut; early stages of pregnancy)
- c) high risk: mid-January to mid-July (food supplies low for pregnant cows; calving period)
 highest risk: mid-May to mid-July (calves as newborns)

Outstanding/unresolved areas of TRAM:

- a) Mooseskin Johnny West (in the north-west part of the Telkwa Mountains and including Starr Basin and Eagle Peak)-winter motorized
- b) Meat Cache (north of Grizzly Plateau, in the south Telkwas)-winter motorized
- c) Grizzly Plateau (south Telkwas)-summer motorized

Recommendations from local Ministry (FLNRO) staff and your feedback

Biologists Laura Grant and Jocelyn Campbell would like to meet with all interested Backpacker members on Thursday, Feb. 16th, 7pm, in the Nora Building, 3726 Alfred St, Smithers, to present the Ministry's report to you and to ask for your reaction.

As Backpackers, we enjoy the natural world in which we recreate. That world is rich in landscapes and living things. As individuals and as a local society, we can be active in protecting these environments and the living things, including caribou, that inhabit them.

TELKWA CARIBOU RECOVERY
OUTSTANDING/UNRESOLVED AREAS OF TRAM
by Jay Gilden

a) Mooseskin Johnny West (NW Telkwa Mountains, including Starr Basin and Eagle Peak)

Issue: winter motorized

The snowmobilers want to convert this from its current designation of generally winter non-motorized with special, limited exceptions to completely winter motorized with no restrictions on entry. The current designation was accepted by the snowmobilers in a 2003 agreement they signed with the Ministry. Before that, the area was non-motorized with no exceptions.

This area contains key winter caribou habitat. The scientific panel, in their recommendations, urged that access be extremely limited with only a few trips in per winter for both motorized and non-motorized users.

Skiers were willing to live with this, but want the snowmobile trips to have a designated period when they would occur and for the ski trips to have a different designated time in order to keep the two activities separate.

b) Meat Cache (north of Grizzly Plateau, in the south Telkwas)

Issue: winter motorized

This area was also the subject of the 2003 agreements between the Ministry and the local snowmobile clubs, in which the Houston club agreed to stay out of the part of the Meat Cache in question (before that time the entire Meat Cache was off-limits to all motorized use). The Houston Club now refuses to agree to the limitations that they themselves pledged to follow in 2003.

c) Grizzly Plateau (south Telkwas)

Issue: summer motorized

This area was previously designated summer non-motorized. The quad group initially asked for one sanctioned ride (i.e. authorized ride under Club sponsorship with Ministry supervision and scheduled in advance). There was general agreement to this request. That agreement was then repudiated, with some members of TRAM seeking an unlimited number of motorized entries and to allow anyone (not just the clubs) to sponsor these outings. In our mind, this would effectively convert this area from non-motorized to motorized. This area is made up of a high alpine grass-covered plateau that would be severely damaged by motorized use that went off the hardened path.