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By: Wayne Thorp, Director

Initiatives and Projects Update

Introduction

The *Caribou Landscape Management Association* (CLMA) was formed in June 2005. A commitment of its inaugural work-plan was to complete Quicknotes four times a year starting in 2006. The purpose of the Quicknotes are to provide a brief summary of activities and progress of the *Caribou Landscape Management Association*. This second Quicknote provides a general update on initiatives and projects of the Association and its partners. For more information about the Caribou Landscape Management Association and its partners visit www.fmf.ab.ca/CLMA.htm.

The members of the *Caribou Landscape Management Association* seek collaborative solutions to caribou conservation, often resulting in small steps that contribute to integrated land management. The work-plan of the *Caribou Landscape Management Association* focuses its efforts and resources on projects that:

1. Minimize the impact of industrial activities on caribou habitat;
2. Support government programs to recover caribou populations.



Projects

The *Caribou Landscape Management Association* is currently involved in two projects:

1. Integrated Industry Access Plan
2. Little Smoky Caribou Calf Project

Integrated Industry Access Plan

The mandate of the *Caribou Landscape Management Association* (CLMA) is to develop and implement integrated landscape management plans and conservation actions for the Little Smoky and A la Pêche caribou herds. The ranges of these herds are located in west-central Alberta, an area rich in ecological, social and economic values including timber and natural gas. Developing road access in the ranges of these two caribou herds is needed to support allocated resource extraction and associated economic and social benefits.

The *Caribou Landscape Management Association* and its partners recognize that upfront road planning will reduce the road footprint resulting from the current “plan as you go” approach. Minimizing the footprint from long-term access through a coordinated approach will benefit the caribou, other wildlife species and the forest ecology. Furthermore, this approach makes good business sense as it results in lower road construction, maintenance, and reclamation costs. The Integrated Industry Access Plan was prepared over a course of several months and was submitted to government for their review in November 2005. The *Caribou Landscape Management Association* anticipates that the plan will be used for new access development in the area starting in fall of 2006. The plan identifies the “backbone” of permanent all weather access requirements for the energy and forest sectors within the caribou ranges

of the Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou herds. The plan includes all forest companies who operate in the area as well as the major oil and gas producers with leases in the area.

Integration of activities requires a fully cooperative approach to doing business and this plan is a first step. The access plan is seen as a “living “ document that will be continually updated and monitored. There are many issues that will be worked on over the next several months such as landscape objectives, best practises, reclamation, continued integration and a monitoring program to ensure effectiveness. Ideally, the Integrated Industry Access Plan will be used to guide all roads developed in this region.

Little Smoky Caribou Calf Pilot Project

An innovative project to increase recruitment numbers of the Little Smoky caribou herd has secured 10 pregnant cows within a fenced area in northwestern Alberta. Recruitment is the survival of new calves. This project is modelled after the Chisana Caribou project. Similar to the Little Smoky herd, the Yukon-based Chisana Caribou herd, experienced high calf-mortality. The Chisana Caribou Project placed cows and their calves in an enclosure to protect them from predation in an effort to restore population. Initial results are extremely promising. There is a 75% calf survival rate among protected calves compared to a 12.5% survival rate for calves in the unfenced population.



The government-led Little Smoky Caribou Calf Pilot Project will protect the cows and their offspring from wolves and other predators in the region until early summer, when calves reach a size where they can fend for themselves in the wild, thus improving their survival. The most vulnerable period in a caribou's life is during its first few months where the calves are often preyed upon by animals such as wolves.

The pregnant caribou are being kept inside a fenced area, are monitored regularly and receive supplemental food and water. No public or industrial access is allowed near the project site.

Major project partners in the Caribou Calf project include Sustainable Resource Development, the Caribou Landscape Management Association members and Husky Energy.