

This statement is to update and establish timelines for the development of a National recovery strategy for the Woodland Caribou, Boreal Population (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*)

The “**Scientific Review for the Identification of Critical Habitat for Woodland Caribou, Boreal Population (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) in Canada**” was initiated to inform the development of a recovery strategy for this population of caribou. Although the review provides an analysis of the state of knowledge of boreal woodland caribou habitat and proposes a framework to support decision making, it does not provide enough guidance as to the amounts or spatial distribution of habitat disturbance that can be tolerated. Further it has not incorporated aboriginal traditional knowledge in a systematic way. The information provided is inadequate to enable the identification of critical habitat. Environment Canada is committed to identifying critical habitat for the boreal caribou in the recovery strategy. To that end, a series of western science studies are planned. These studies will form the basis, with other landscape information, to identify critical habitat. Expected completion date for this work is December 2010.

These western science studies will be informed by Aboriginal traditional knowledge that Environment Canada plans to collect through a series of regional workshops with Aboriginal peoples, culminating in a national workshop. The goal of these workshops will be to inform recovery planning and implementation. Environment Canada will work closely with National Aboriginal Organizations to develop and hold these workshops.

Environment Canada is also planning consultations on key elements of a recovery strategy including: recovery goals and objectives; potential threat mitigation activities including land management regimes; industry best management practices; Aboriginal traditional practices; and other potential recovery activities. Consultation activities will include: provinces and territories; wildlife management boards; Aboriginal groups; environmental non-government organizations; industry associations; and the public.

It is planned that the recovery strategy will be released in 2011. While these various streams of work are underway to inform its development, the information gathered to date on populations and threats will be widely shared to enable land managers to prudently manage the landscape in the interim.

Regular updates on progress of the work described above will be provided on the SARA Public Registry.