Mountain Caribou Conservation and the Changing Code

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The Forest Practices Board is an independent public watchdog in British Columbia. It reports to the public about the soundness of management of forest resources. In the course of its mandate, the Board conducts special projects to examine forestry topics of interest to the public. The Board is currently conducting a special project to review the status of forest management as it relates to mountain caribou. The Board has previously investigated concerns about measures taken to conserve mountain caribou under the Forest Practices Code. The Board has also commented on the need to protect caribou habitat and has requested review of approval of forest practices that, in the Board’s opinion, did not adequately address mountain caribou requirements.

Recently, the provincial government began to implement changes to forest practice regulations to establish an objectives-based forest practices code. The new code will focus on achievement of desired results. Objectives and strategies for caribou habitat will have to be clearly defined and incorporated into forest stewardship plans.

The Board’s special project includes a review of the variety of management regimes used in the province to maintain caribou habitat and sustain caribou populations. We are examining these with attention to compliance and effectiveness of forest management approaches with the Forest Practices Code and other factors that may affect mountain caribou conservation.