

# Backgrounder on the Cost-Sharing Understanding Concerning the Implementation of the Cooperation Agreement for the Protection and Recovery of Species at Risk in Quebec Applied to Boreal Caribou and its Habitat

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks (MFFP) have signed a *Cost-Sharing Understanding Concerning the Implementation of the Cooperation Agreement for the Protection and Recovery of Species at Risk in Quebec Applied to Boreal Caribou and its Habitat*, under which ECCC will provide the MFFP with financial support for some of its activities contributing to the protection and recovery of the boreal caribou in Quebec in 2019–2020, 2020–2021 and 2021–2022. This Agreement is governed by the principles of the [Cooperation Agreement for the Protection and Recovery of Species at Risk in Quebec](#), which expires in 2022.

The purpose of this Agreement is to implement activities that promote the self-sustainability of boreal caribou populations in all ranges in Quebec, thereby contributing to the population and distribution objectives of the [Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou \(\*Rangifer tarandus caribou\*\), Boreal population in Canada](#). This Agreement will also ensure the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the development and implementation of conservation actions.

The full version of the Agreement is available on [the website of the Secrétariat québécois aux relations canadiennes](#). An English translation of the Agreement can be provided by ECCC upon request.

## Quebec's Approach

To promote the self-sustainability of boreal caribou populations, the Quebec approach proposes to maintain and restore a critical mass (over 80%) of suitable habitats by forming large continuous entities south of the northern limit of commercial forests over a large portion of the boreal caribou range in Quebec. This is landscape-scale planning, based on the presence of protected areas, the current state of habitat and the means needed to restore or maintain habitat quality. It includes concrete actions for additional permanent and temporary protections and forest management practices to meet targets for restoring and maintaining habitat for the species.

This planning is based on two-scale functional zoning. At the landscape scale, the components are:

- Territories north of the northern limit for commercial forests and the residual forest area on the Lower North Shore where forestry activity is not permitted and other development activities have little impact on caribou;
- Large suitable areas that generally cover more than 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> with low disturbance rates where particular land-use planning practices are applied with the goal of ensuring the self-sustainability of the boreal caribou populations that use it by controlling the thresholds of disturbance, maintaining a relatively undisturbed forest matrix and minimizing the footprint of permanent disturbances;

- Areas undergoing habitat restoration that generally cover more than 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> where active habitat restoration actions are being carried out, centred around the maintenance of relatively undisturbed patches, significant reduction of permanent disturbances and attaining, as quickly as possible, a level of disturbance that promotes the self-sustainability of the populations that use them; and
- Connectivity areas are aimed at promoting exchanges between the different large suitable areas and between large suitable areas and areas undergoing habitat restoration through the maintenance of functional connectivity.

At the operational scale, the approach is aimed at maintaining large forest patches (protected forest patches) that are relatively undisturbed (less than 20% disturbance) that have a crucial role for caribou in the large suitable areas and areas undergoing habitat restoration, and to temporarily conserve current and potential forest patches (which will be restored) in habitat areas undergoing restoration and connectivity areas. These are protected areas listed in the Quebec Register of Protected Areas, protected areas under study, and large forest patches of 50 to more than 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> that are currently covered by protective measures.

Enhanced protection of suitable habitats for caribou will contribute to the recovery of the species and, in turn, the exercising of the activities and rights of Indigenous Peoples. In this regard, the delineation of the areas targeted by the Strategy, which are covered by protection measures, have been discussed with implicated Indigenous communities and will be finalized in close consultation with them over the coming year. Indigenous Peoples will also participate in caribou monitoring and management and in habitat restoration activities.

## Activities listed in the ECCC-MFFP 2019–2022 Three-Year Joint Programming Applied to Boreal Caribou and its Habitat

Note : translation of the table of activities is provided for information purposes only, in case of disparity, the French version prevails.

Act. No.	Title of Activity	Description of Activity	Authority Responsible for Carrying Out the Activity	Time Frame	Deliverables
<b>4— Recovery implementation: Activities relating to the protection of critical habitats, stewardship and voluntary conservation, which are provided for in section 9.2. of the Agreement, as well as the activities identified in the recovery planning documents (education and communication, knowledge acquisition, threat reduction, introduction and reintroduction, monitoring, etc.) and activities for developing common recovery implementation tools.</b>					
4.1	Acquisition of knowledge in order to support habitat management activities.	Coordinate monitoring of effectiveness and applied research in order to adapt forest management practices and protective measures in boreal caribou habitat, for example a) specify the thresholds of disturbance that promote self-sustainability at the scale of boreal caribou populations so as to adapt management targets; b) monitoring of the dismantling of forest roads to ensure the success of restoration and adjust practices; and c) monitoring of boreal caribou habitat selection in large suitable areas, areas habitat undergoing restoration and connectivity areas in order to adjust habitat management and restoration practices.	MFFP	2022-03-01	Technical and research reports on the main activities.

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4.2	Progressive implementation of management practices aimed at habitat conservation.	Pending the adoption of a <i>Strategy for forest-dwelling caribou habitat management</i> , incorporate interim measures in forest management activities (management of levels of disturbance, integration of functional zoning and habitat restoration, particularly in protected forest patches) and modify operational planning in order to progressively implement management practices aimed at habitat conservation (QC1, QC2, QC3, QC4, QC5, QC6).	MFFP	2022-03-01	Production of a report detailing the progress made in incorporating interim measures in forest management activities.
4.3	Creation of protected forest patches.	Carry out the work of dismantling and reforestation of current forest roads to reduce the permanent footprint of the disturbances, particularly for the creation of protected forest patches (QC1, QC2, QC3, QC4 and QC6). Incorporate in forest management planning administrative protection for the 28,470 km <sup>2</sup> of protected forest patches included in large suitable areas, areas undergoing habitat restoration and connectivity areas (QC1, QC2, QC3, QC4 and QC6).	MFFP	2022-03-01	Production of a report detailing the work of dismantling and reforestation of current forest roads.
4.4	Dismantling and reforestation of forest roads.	Carry out the dismantling and reforestation of forest roads following harvesting activities (QC1, QC2, QC3, QC4, QC5, QC6).	MFFP	2022-03-01	Production of a report detailing the work of dismantling and reforestation of current forest roads.

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4.5	Identification of regeneration issues and ensuring the regeneration of problem areas.	Identify regeneration issues and ensure the regeneration of problem areas following harvesting activities (QC1, QC2, QC3, QC4, QC5, QC6).	MFFP	2021-03-01	Production of a report detailing the regeneration issues and identifying the areas regenerated.
4.6	Management of connectivity.	Develop and implement an approach to ensure connectivity between large suitable areas, and between large suitable areas and areas undergoing habitat restoration, including the use of protected forest patches (QC4, QC5, QC6).	MFFP	2021-03-01	Production of a report detailing the progress of the actions taken by the MFFP for the management of connectivity.
4.7	Control of predators and alternate prey.	In the areas undergoin habitat restoration that are identified in the strategy, when the status of the population requires it (QC1, QC2, QC3, QC4): a) establish guidelines for the implementation of the control of predators and alternate prey; b) maximize the survival rate by increasing the hunting pressure on predators; c) reduce the population level of alternate prey by increased hunting pressure; and d) determine the effectiveness of the control of predators and alternate prey and adjust the activities based on the results.	MFFP	2022-03-01	Production of a report detailing the progress made concerning the number of catches of predators and alternate prey.

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4.8	Support the involvement of Indigenous communities.	Support the involvement of Indigenous communities in order to promote the development of their expertise/capacity for the implementation of the Quebec strategy, particularly for protected forest patches, e.g. dismantling and reforestation of forest roads, control of predators and prey, harmonization of forest planning, cultural aspect: a) hiring of personnel; b) travel and participation; c) indirect expenses; and d) equipment rental.	MFFP	2022-03-01	Word or Excel table presenting the list of initiatives promoting the involvement of Aboriginal communities based on the activities carried out.
4.9	Contribution of future protected areas recognized in the Quebec Register of Protected Areas to the protection of boreal caribou and its habitat.	Protection of boreal caribou habitat by a) continuing, in collaboration with the departments concerned, the process leading to the designation of new protected areas contributing to the protection of boreal caribou habitat, including in particular the <i>Grande aire protégée des Caribous-Forestiers-de-Manouane-Manicouagan</i> . The area covered by this proposed protected area, which totals 10,192 km <sup>2</sup> , includes 3,305 km <sup>2</sup> of protected areas already recognized in the Quebec Register of Protected Areas and will therefore permit the creation of new protected areas covering 6,887 km <sup>2</sup> ; and b) continuing the processes leading to the granting of permanent status for the planned Chisesaakahikan-et-de-la-rivière-Broadback Biodiversity Reserve. However, this area is already included in the Quebec Register of Protected Areas.	MFFP in collaboration with MELCC	2022-03-01	Report on the number of hectares of new protected areas listed in the Quebec Register of Protected Areas that are included in the provincial range of boreal caribou.

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<b>5 — Consultations: General provisions, consultations with Aboriginal communities and organizations, consultations with other stakeholders = Schedule B of the Agreement and socio-economic analyses</b>					
5.1	Promote the participation and engagement of Indigenous communities.	Promote the participation and engagement of Indigenous communities through the Quebec-First Nations Panel on Woodland Caribou (3 to 4 meetings annually, in which ECCC will participate): a) travel and participation; b) organization of the meetings and of the Partners' Panel of the <i>Woodland Caribou Habitat Stewardship Plan</i> (3 to 4 meetings annually, travel and participation of Indigenous communities).	MFFP	2022-03-01	Participation report detailing the list of communities met with, the meetings of the Quebec-First Nations Panel on Woodland Caribou and of the Partners' Panel of the <i>Woodland Caribou Habitat Stewardship Plan</i> held, and the related ECCC funding transferred to the communities.
<b>6 — Monitoring = Section 12 of the Agreement</b>					
6.1	Monitoring of the Understanding	Establishment of an MFFP-ECCC committee responsible for monitoring this Cost-sharing Understanding.	MFFP and ECCC	2020-03-31	Minutes of the committee meetings.