

Alberta's Caribou Action Plan



Leadership for Recovery of Alberta's Caribou Populations

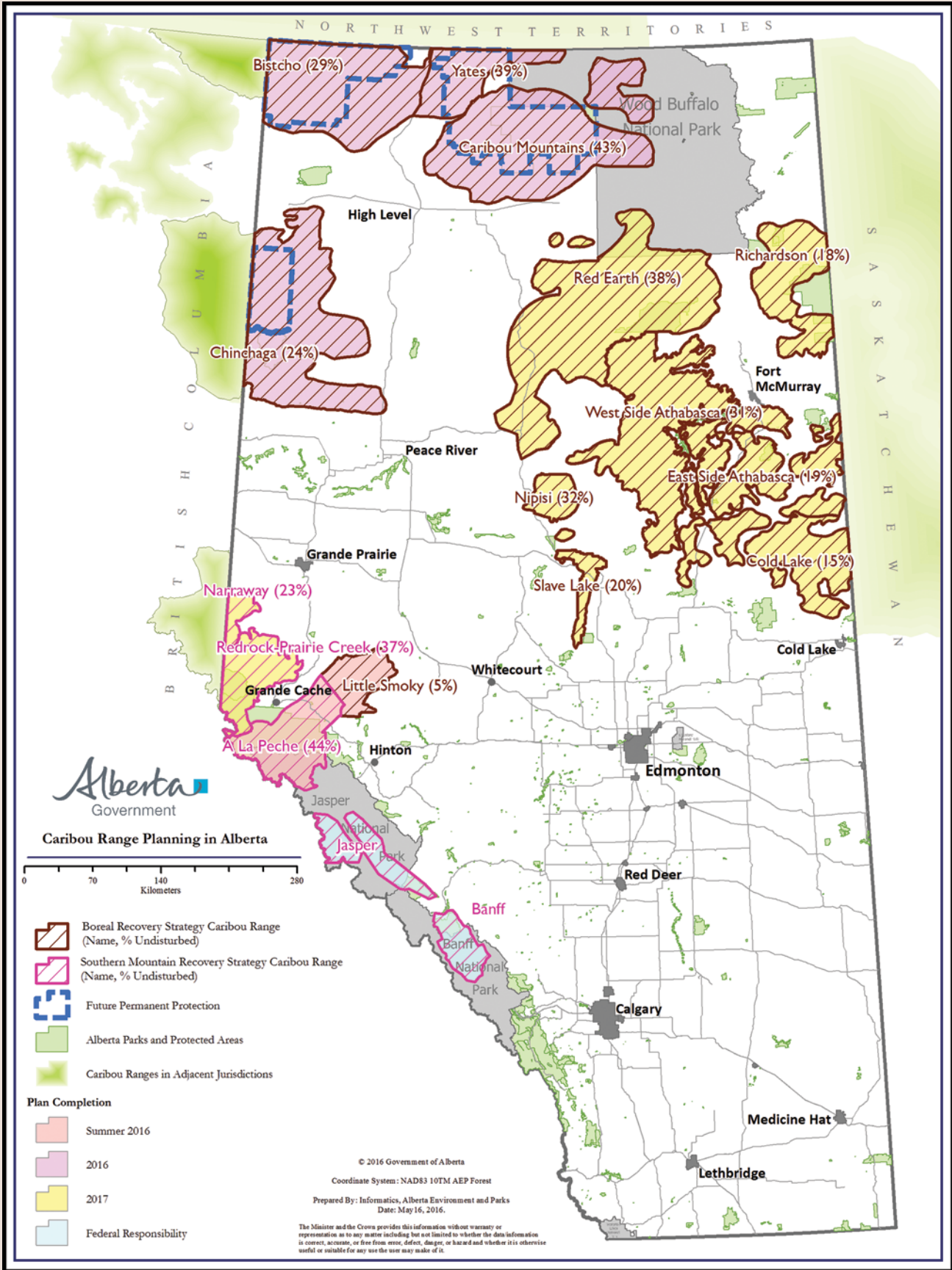
Caribou are an important feature of Alberta's landscapes, but they are declining, threatened by expanding human development and climate change. Over the last four decades, Alberta has struggled to recover caribou while striking a balance with development and community stability. We are committed to achieving self-sustaining caribou populations. We cannot and will not abandon them to history.

Alberta's Caribou Action Plan achieves caribou recovery, habitat management and restoration while protecting our economic interests and vital jobs.

Advancing Protection of Caribou Ranges (see map)

We will provide permanent protection to an additional 1.8 million hectares of caribou range in northwestern Alberta, for a grand total of 4.9 million hectares provincially. With this move, Alberta becomes Canada's leader in permanent protection of woodland caribou ranges.

- Alberta has 15 caribou ranges under provincial jurisdiction, including boreal and mountain caribou populations. We have started with the most critical ranges first, and moving forward, we will apply what we learned to the remaining ranges.
- Over the next year, we will extend permanent protection to an additional 1.8 million hectares of caribou range in the Chinchaga, Bischo, Yates and Caribou Mountains ranges, for a grand total of 4.9 million hectares provincially. These ranges contain approximately 40 per cent of Alberta's provincial caribou population.
- This action will set Alberta at the forefront of caribou protection by achieving permanent protection of 24 per cent of the Chinchaga, 61 per cent of the Bischo, 72 per cent of the Caribou Mountains and 72 per cent of the Yates range, which may also provide substantial forest carbon sinks and wetland protection.
- As Alberta develops range plans, it will examine other opportunities for further protection.





Action for the Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou ranges

We are releasing a draft range plan for a 60-day public review on June 8, 2016. Albertans are encouraged to visit our [online survey](#) to provide their input by August 5.

Once public review closes for the Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou ranges, we will work to finalize our range plan by September 30, 2016, towards achieving:

- Restoration of over 10,000 kilometres of seismic lines in 5 years, paid for by the energy sector, generating hundreds of jobs each year of the work.
- Construction and operation of a large-scale (~100 km²) fenced caribou rearing facility to protect and raise caribou calves to the yearling stage, cost-shared between government and industrial land users, generating 35-40 jobs during construction, with ongoing permanent staff of 10-15.
- Government financing to minimize the impact of these initiatives to the energy sector in the initial years.
- Adoption of integrated land management practices that ensure future development is planned cooperatively by the 120+ companies operating in these ranges to minimize the creation of new habitat disturbances.
- Reducing forest harvesting and limiting it to levels and locations that achieve caribou persistence while habitat restoration is completed and the caribou rearing facility is built. Forest harvesting will still be sufficient to maintain the necessary fibre supply for existing facilities.

Maintaining Populations in the Little Smoky and A La Peche for the Short-Term

Alberta needs to take strong, immediate action to ensure populations remain while ambitious restoration work is underway.

- Alberta will test innovative approaches to support a working landscape, including building a caribou rearing facility. Leveraging current research, a large fenced caribou rearing facility in the Little Smoky range. Leveraging current research, a large fenced caribou rearing facility will be established to protect and increase the caribou population.
- Management of our wolf populations in these ranges is necessary for the foreseeable future. At this time, it is about ensuring caribou persist in Alberta. Over time, habitat management should reduce the need to manage wolf populations. Consideration will be given to appropriate management techniques.

Oversight and Transparency

- Ensuring we are on the path to caribou recovery is important. Alberta is establishing an Expert Committee on Implementation of the Little Smoky and A La Peche Caribou Range Plan, comprised of unbiased experts on key implementation topic areas, including Indigenous traditional knowledge.
- This committee will provide advice and oversight on recovery actions, research and monitoring, with independent recommendations to Government annually in support of caribou recovery.



Partnering with Indigenous Peoples

- Our Indigenous Peoples have lived in harmony with the caribou for thousands of years, and we are taking the opportunity to work with them in our recovery efforts.
- This work provides opportunities for Indigenous peoples to lead and support caribou recovery through closer involvement in range planning in the northwest, to contributions to implementing caribou recovery in the Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou ranges.

Working in Partnership with Industry

- Alberta's forest and energy industry's play a critical role in our economy. As the largest land users in caribou ranges, continued efforts by these industries to develop innovative practices and support Alberta's caribou management actions are critical to our success.
- Industry funding for critical actions such as restoration and caribou population management will enable Alberta to move forward on its actions to protect caribou.

Forest Carbon Sinks and Wetland Protection

- In addition to the habitat our forests provide caribou, they also sequester carbon from the atmosphere. This is increasingly important given the risks climate change poses to Canada and the rest of the world.
- Alberta's forests can contribute meaningfully to offset carbon dioxide emissions. These future protected areas can provide a lasting carbon sink.
- They will also provide important protection for the wetlands found within them, offsetting development in other areas.
- Habitat restoration activities will be designed to improve habitat conditions for caribou as well as sequestering carbon.

Path Forward for Remaining Ranges

- Alberta will accelerate preparation of range plans for all its caribou ranges. It is committed to completing plans for four more ranges by the end of 2016, with all remaining range plans complete by the end of 2017.
- Each range plan will recognize the uniqueness of the area, built on a foundation of habitat restoration, reduction of development footprint, integrated land management, and managing recreational access.
- Actions to manage caribou and restore the landscape will also create jobs that will support our communities.
- Alberta will work closely with the Federal Government and encourage their meaningful contribution to achieving self-sustaining caribou populations.