

### 2016-2017 PROJECT PLAN SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>B1-1-6 DNA Methods for Boreal Caribou</b>
<b>Type of Project:</b>	Focused Study
<b>Delivery Agent:</b>	Alberta Environment and Parks
<b>Project Contact:</b>	Simon Slater (AEP) - simon.slater@gov.ab.ca
<b>Budget:</b>	\$ 380,000

#### Project Description:

Woodland caribou are a threatened species in Alberta; Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) is delivering the enhanced woodland caribou monitoring under the Oil Sands Monitoring Initiative. This monitoring builds on current caribou monitoring done by AEP and is testing procedures and techniques to facilitate estimates of caribou population size and composition of woodland caribou within the oil sands region of Alberta. The intent of this program is to evaluate a scientifically robust DNA sampling method to estimate woodland caribou population size and composition.

#### Project Objectives:

- Evaluate sight-resight methods for determining caribou population size and composition estimates through the collection of caribou fecal pellet samples.
- Partner with Trent University's Natural Resources DNA Profiling and Forensic Centre (NRDPFC) to perform genetic analysis.
- Estimate caribou population size and structure within the caribou populations that overlap the oil sands region.

#### Key Outcomes:

- Evaluation of a new method to monitor woodland caribou populations.
- Estimate woodland caribou populations in the oil sands region. Information obtained from this program will subsequently inform the development and implementation of well-considered and practical plans for caribou conservation and recovery in Alberta.

#### Geographic Scope:

The Lower Athabasca Region and the Lower Peace Region. Specific caribou population ranges to be surveyed include the East Side Athabasca River, Cold Lake, Richardson, West Side Athabasca River, Red Earth and Nipisi. The Red Earth caribou population was to be sampled in the 2015-16 year however due to unsuitable survey conditions this work was cancelled. Red Earth will be sampled in 2016-17 if weather permits.

#### Associated Data and Reports:

All survey data are submitted to AEP Provincial Caribou Database. Reports include summary reports for caribou ranges surveyed in 2015-16.