

NEW MAPS IDENTIFY INDUSTRIAL DISTURBANCES THAT THREATEN WOODLAND CARIBOU IN CANADA

EDMONTON, April 09, 2009 – A scientific review released today by the federal government utilized Global Forest Watch Canada's national dataset on industrial disturbances. This dataset was provided to assist the Government of Canada in assessing its responsibilities to identify the "critical habitats" of nationally threatened boreal population of woodland caribou.

The federal government report, *Scientific review for the identification of critical habitat for woodland caribou*, concluded that critical caribou habitat for individual populations can be identified; meaning that national recovery planning for the boreal population of woodland caribou under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) can proceed.

The report, which was developed with the support of a team of 18 leading landscape ecologists, caribou biologists, spatial habitat modelers and population analysts from across North America, utilized, amongst other things, Global Forest Watch Canada's detailed national dataset on industrial disturbances to test a hypothesis about "critical habitat" for the nationally threatened boreal population of woodland caribou.

"Woodland caribou are regarded by many as a symbol of Canada's boreal forest wilderness and they are the flagship species for boreal forest conservation in Canada," says Peter Lee, Executive Director of Global Forest Watch Canada. "We are very pleased that our data was utilized in this scientific analysis and now could very well contribute to the protection of this iconic Canadian species."

Among North American ungulates, woodland caribou appear to be the least able to adapt to the magnitude of environmental changes associated with agricultural, urban and industrial development of forests over the last 100 years. Global Forest Watch Canada has been mapping human disturbances from satellite imagery for a number of years and made their disturbance data available to Environment Canada and their scientists for the caribou work. Global Forest Watch Canada has recently publicly released this data as well so that it is now available to other interested parties.

"We have released this important dataset so that scientists, industry, and federal, provincial and territorial governments across Canada can make further use of it for their analysis and identification of the habitat needed for boreal woodland caribou to survive and recover," concludes Peter Lee.

For more info: The federal government report,¹ including the results of the meta-analysis that employed Global Forest Watch Canada's data, is available online at https://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=1761, and Global Forest Watch Canada's key dataset on industrial disturbances ("Canada Access – Combined") is available at: <http://www.globalforestwatch.ca/datawarehouse/datawarehouse.htm>.

Contact:

Peter Lee, Executive Director, Global Forest Watch Canada
780-422-5989 or cell 780-914-6241

¹ Environment Canada. 2009. Scientific review for the identification of critical habitat for woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*), boreal population, in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Environment Canada. 72 pp plus 180 pp appendices.

Global Forest Watch Canada's datasets have been previously employed in species at risk assessments by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), an independent scientific body that assesses which wildlife species are in danger of disappearing from Canada. (COSEWIC. 2004. COSEWIC assessment and status report on the red crossbill *percna* subspecies (*Loxia curvirostra percna*) in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Species in Canada, Ottawa, ON, p.13).

Global Forest Watch Canada provides access to more complete information about development activities in Canada's forests and their environmental impacts. We are convinced providing rigorous information about Canada's forests leads to better decision-making on forest management and use, and ultimately results in forest management regimes that provide a full range of benefits for both present and future generations.

For further information on Global Forest Watch Canada, visit: www.globalforestwatch.ca