

Proposed Continuation of Predator Reduction to Support Caribou Recovery

Presented by the B.C. Caribou Recovery Program



Ministry of
Water, Land and
Resource Stewardship

Welcome

During our time together we will highlight:

- Engagement process
- Caribou background
- Predator reduction
- Caribou habitat
- Next steps and conversation

We will not have time to go into details on complimentary recovery actions or specific sites
We welcome the opportunity to follow up with you and dive deeper into topics of interest.
We will provide links to online materials as well.

[Caribou Recovery Program Webpage](#)

Engagement

Purpose

- To engage and collaborate with First Nations, tenure holders, and interested parties on a proposal for continued predator reduction to support caribou recovery



Process

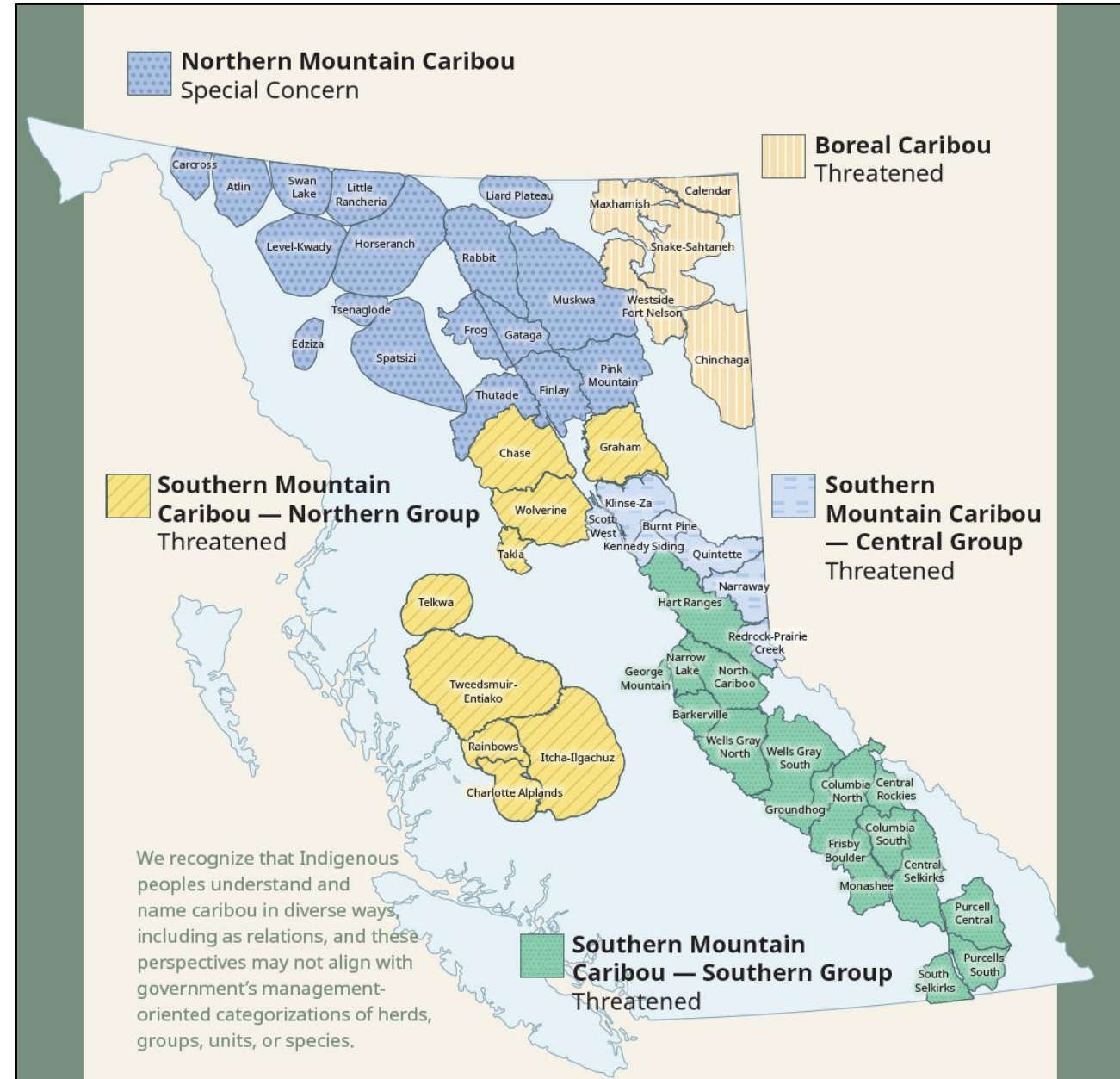
- Have reached the end of the previous 5-year implementation period
- Engagement and consultation will involve over 70 First Nations and hundreds of tenure holders across six natural resource regions overlapping proposed treatment areas
- Additional engagement with special interest groups and specific Indigenous organizations
- Caribou Recovery Program began consultation and engagement in April to inform *Wildlife Act* and *Park Act* permit decisions that could be made by fall of 2026
 - Potential implementation by winter 2026-27



Background

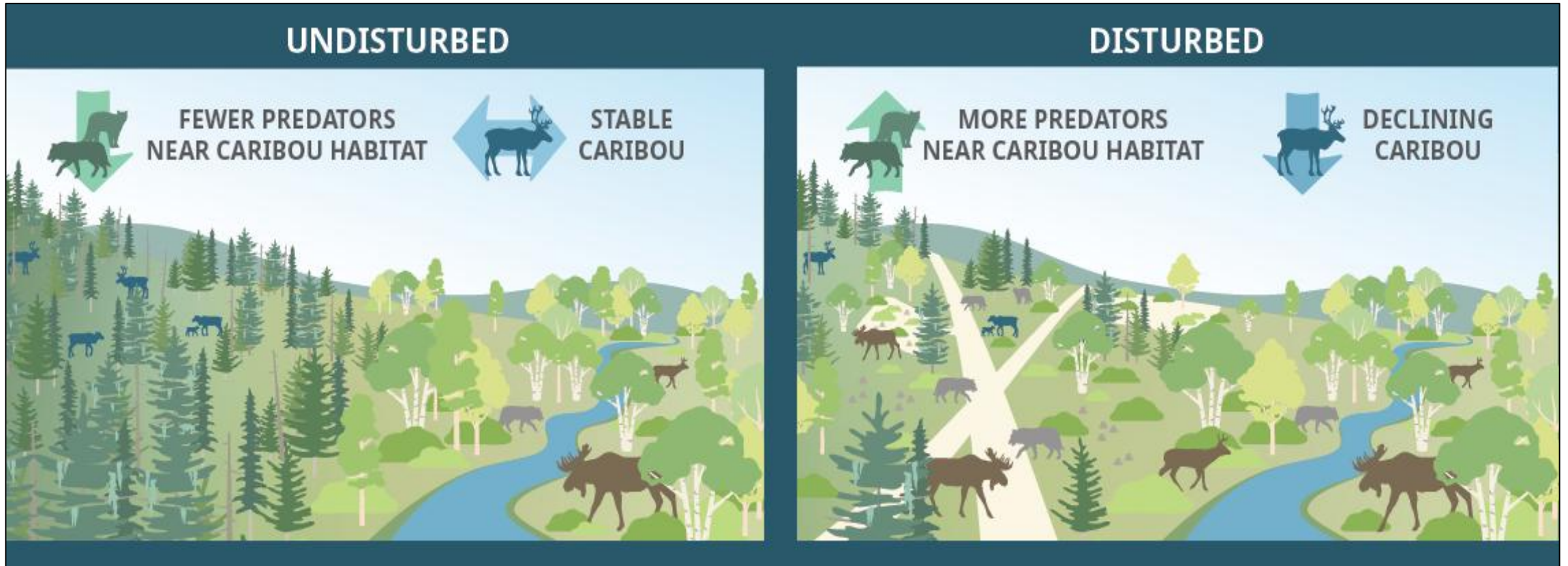
Caribou in British Columbia

- B.C. is home to **54 caribou herds** (distinct populations)
- B.C. has committed to recovery actions under Section 11 of the federal *Species at Risk Act*
- Recovery Actions used in B.C.:
 - Habitat protection and restoration
 - Maternal penning
 - Supplemental feeding
 - **Predator reduction**
 - Recreation management
 - Primary prey management

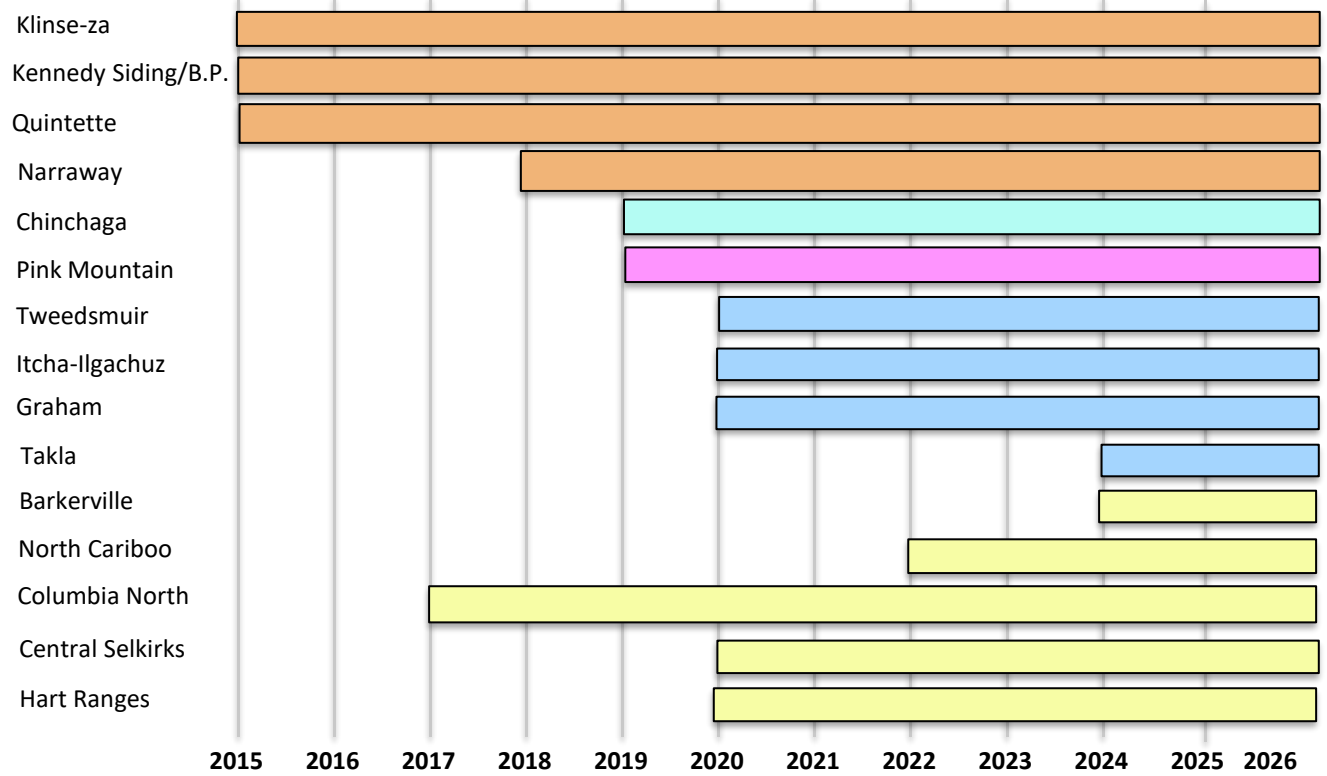
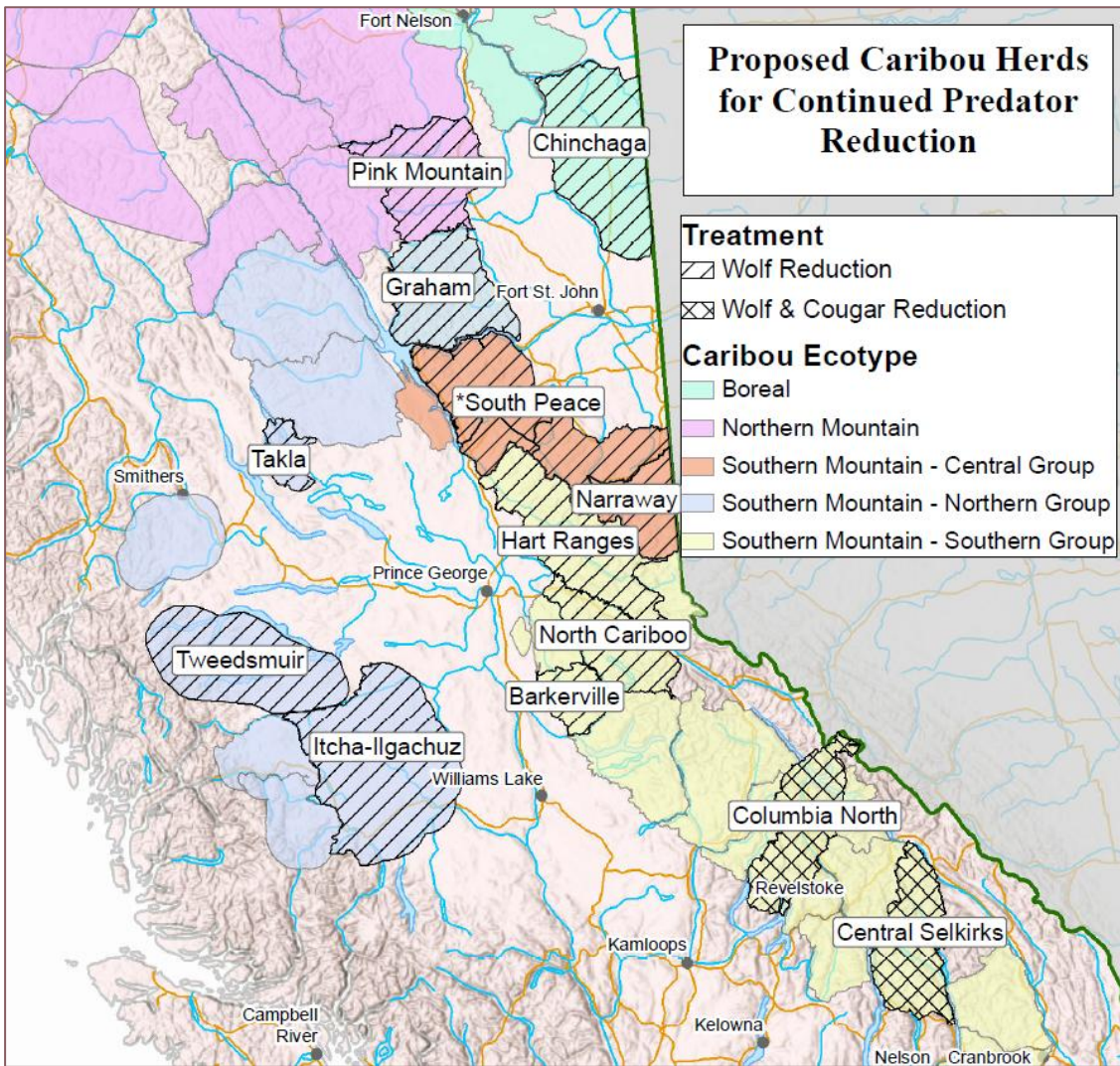


Caribou Population Declines

- Primary cause of declines is the predator-prey imbalance that results from landscape disturbance and habitat alteration



Predator Reduction to Support Caribou Recovery in B.C.

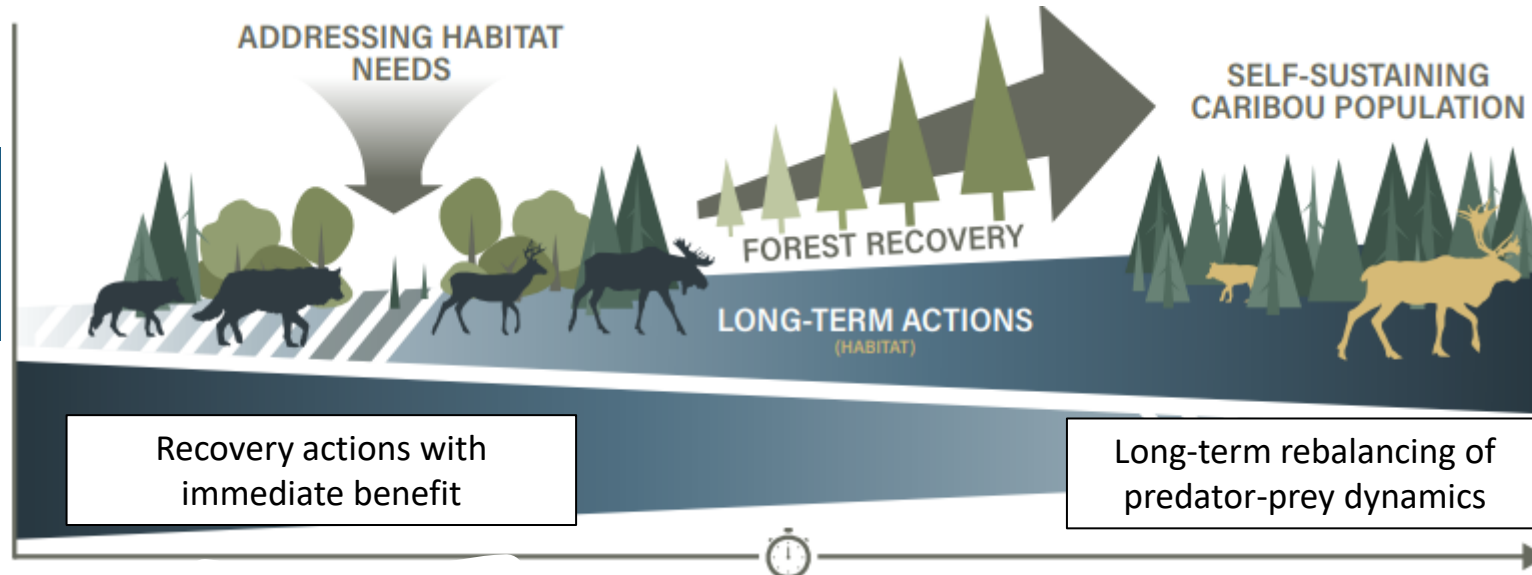


- Predator reduction to support caribou recovery was first implemented in the South Peace in 2015
 - Currently implemented in 15 of B.C.'s 54 woodland caribou herds

* Includes Kennedy Siding/Burnt Pine, Klinse-Za, and Quintette herds

Achieving Self-Sustaining Caribou Populations

Recovery actions that elicit immediate responses along with long-term actions are needed to support caribou recovery



Adaptive management is foundational

Appropriate time scales required to achieve results

Predator Reduction



Predator Reduction to Support Caribou Recovery in B.C.

- Predator reduction – immediate benefits by improving adult and calf survival
 - Allows time for long-term habitat recovery to occur

Our Approach

- [B.C. Caribou Recovery Program's Wolf Reduction Procedure \(2026\)](#)
- Aerial-based wolf reduction
- Ground-based cougar removal

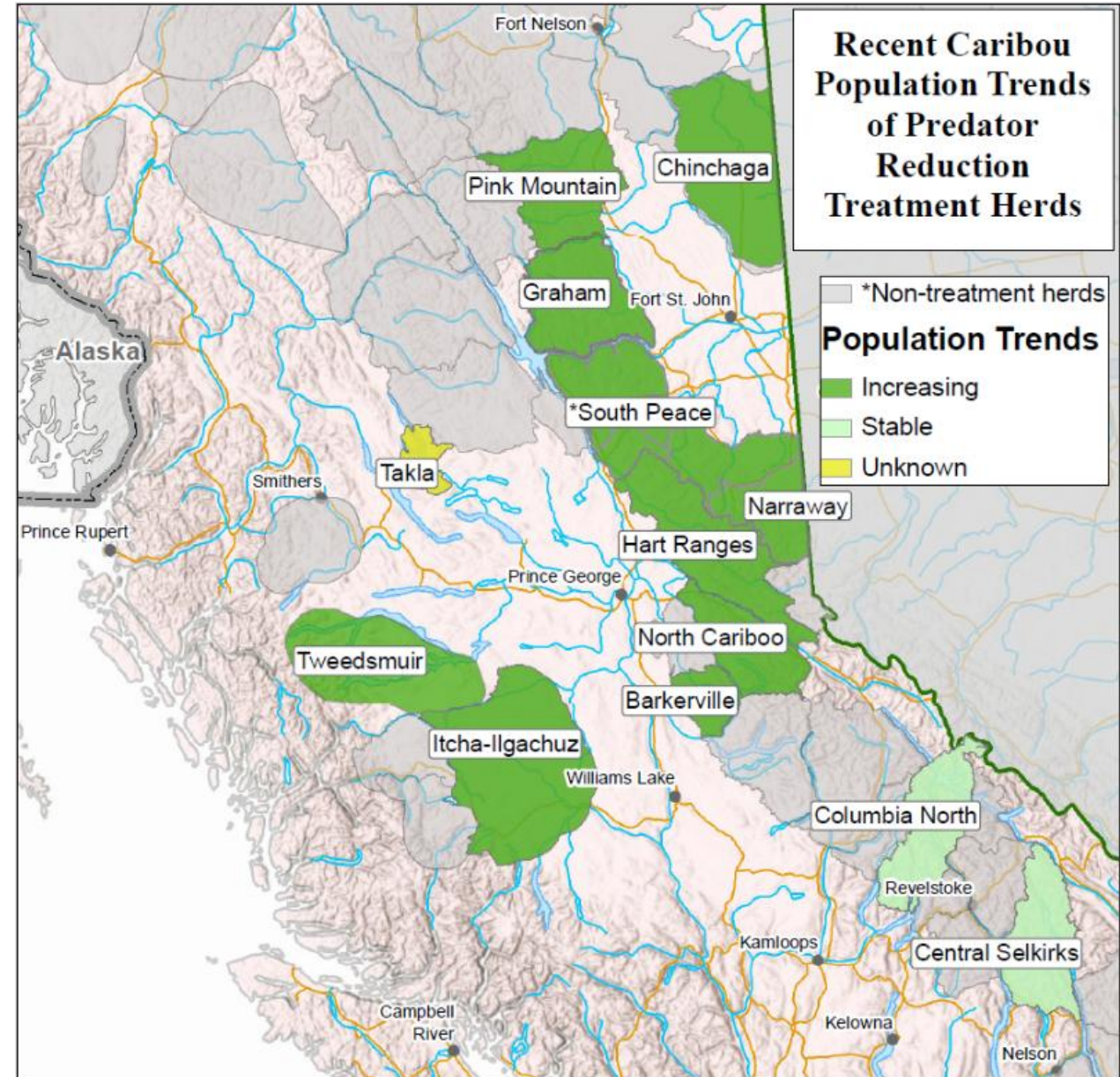


Animal Welfare

- Provincial Standard Operating Procedures
 - [Aerial-based live capture and lethal removal of wolves](#)
- Animal Care Applications
- Canadian Council on Animal Care guidelines
- American Veterinary Medical Association guidelines

Caribou Population Response to Recovery Actions

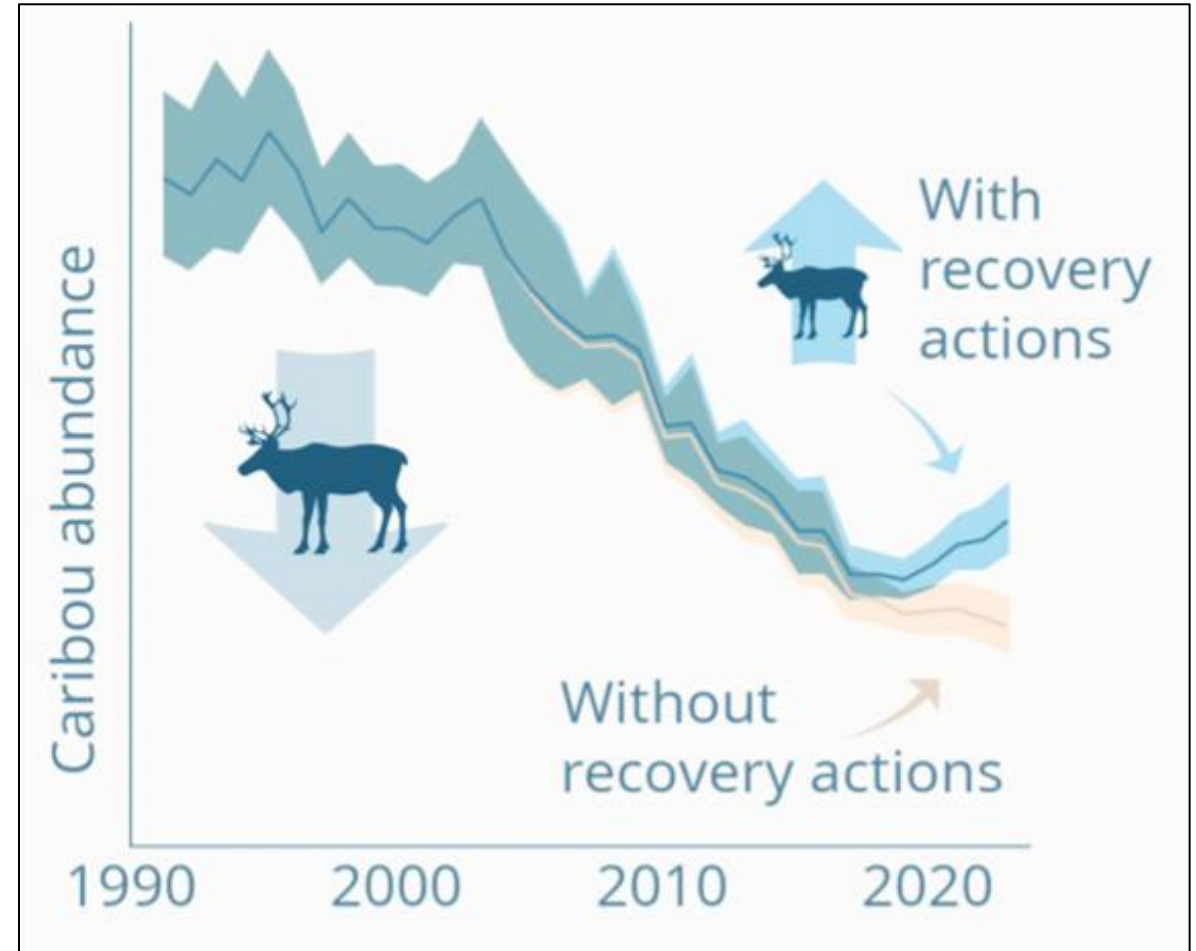
- **Historic Trends:** Steady population declines since the 1990s prior to recovery efforts
 - Significant efforts now underway for many herds
- **Predator reduction** – most effective recovery action for immediate population response
 - Population stabilization or increases observed in 14 of the 15 treatment herds



* Includes Kennedy Siding/Burnt Pine, Klinse-Za, and Quintette herds

Caribou Population Response to Recovery Actions

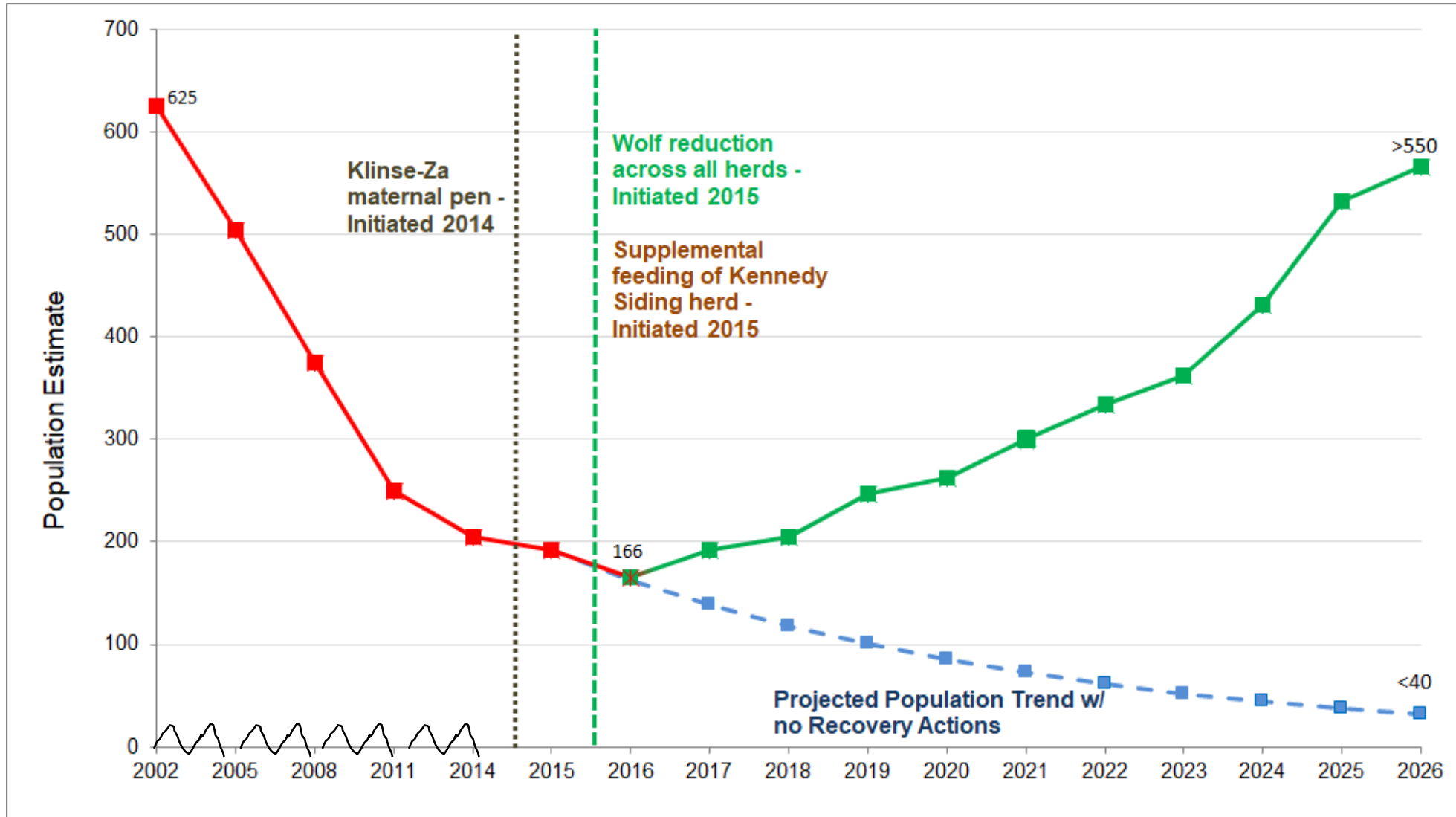
- Population monitoring and adaptive management is critical
- Impact of recovery actions:
 - Estimated 52% increase in Southern Mountain Caribou compared to no intervention (Lamb et al. 2024), as of 2023
 - An addition of ~1,500 caribou



Caribou Population Response to Recovery Actions

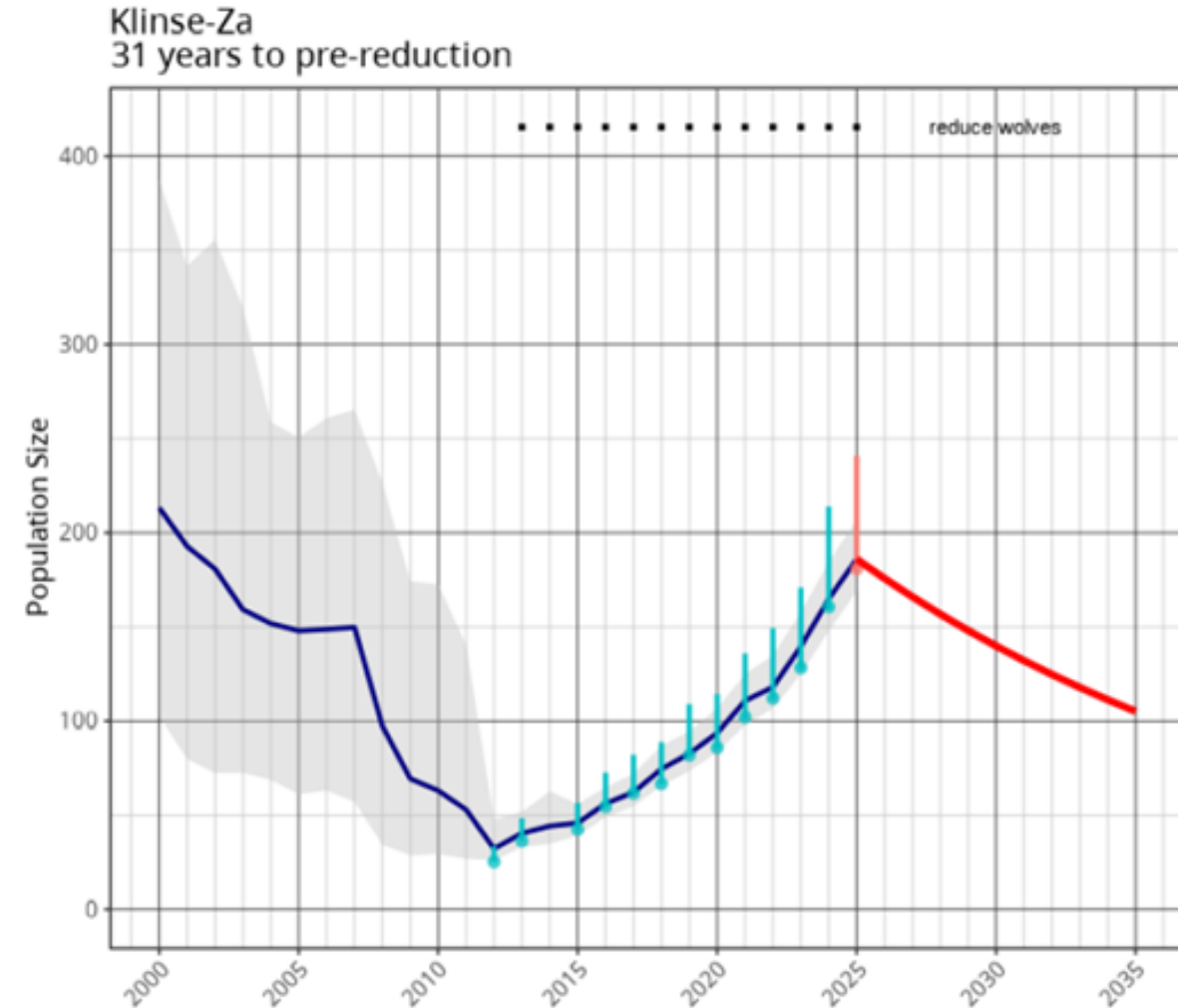
South Peace Caribou – Population Trend

- Example of collaborative caribou recovery efforts
 - Wolf reduction
 - Maternal penning
 - Supplemental feeding
 - Habitat protection and restoration
 - Recreation management



Continuation of Predator Reduction

- **Is predator reduction still required?**
 - Has habitat recovered to the point of rebalancing the predator-prey dynamics without further intervention required?
 - Can the caribou population sustain itself if predator reduction is halted?
- May be required until habitat has recovered to a state where it no longer supports elevated primary prey populations (e.g., moose, elk, and deer) and high wolf populations
- Early discontinuation could lead to rapid declines



Population trajectory with recovery actions ———

Predicted trajectory with no wolf reduction ———

Predator Reduction Program Priorities and Objectives

- Informed by science and Indigenous knowledge
- Safe delivery of field operations
- Humane, effective, and efficient removal of predators
- Caribou population recovery and monitoring
- Adaptive and transparent



Caribou Habitat

Habitat Protection and Restoration

- Habitat protection and restoration are essential to ensure that caribou populations can become self-sustaining over the long term
- Recent achievements include:
 - Klinse-Za/Twin Sisters Park and Protected Area – 2024 – expanded to add 203,000 hectares of protected habitat
 - Whitesail Wildlife Habitat Area – 2025 – protection of over 50,000 hectares of critical calving and migration habitat
 - Boreal caribou range – 2025 – 1.4 million hectares of habitat protection in northeastern B.C.
- Habitat restoration programs are underway across caribou ranges, often co-led with First Nations
 - “2 Billion Trees Program” and B.C.’s Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF).
 - HCTF supported restoration of >1,200 km of linear disturbances, influencing over 100,000 hectares of caribou habitat
 - >700 km of linear disturbances restored in Central Mountain caribou range since 2019 through collaborative efforts between B.C. and First Nations partners



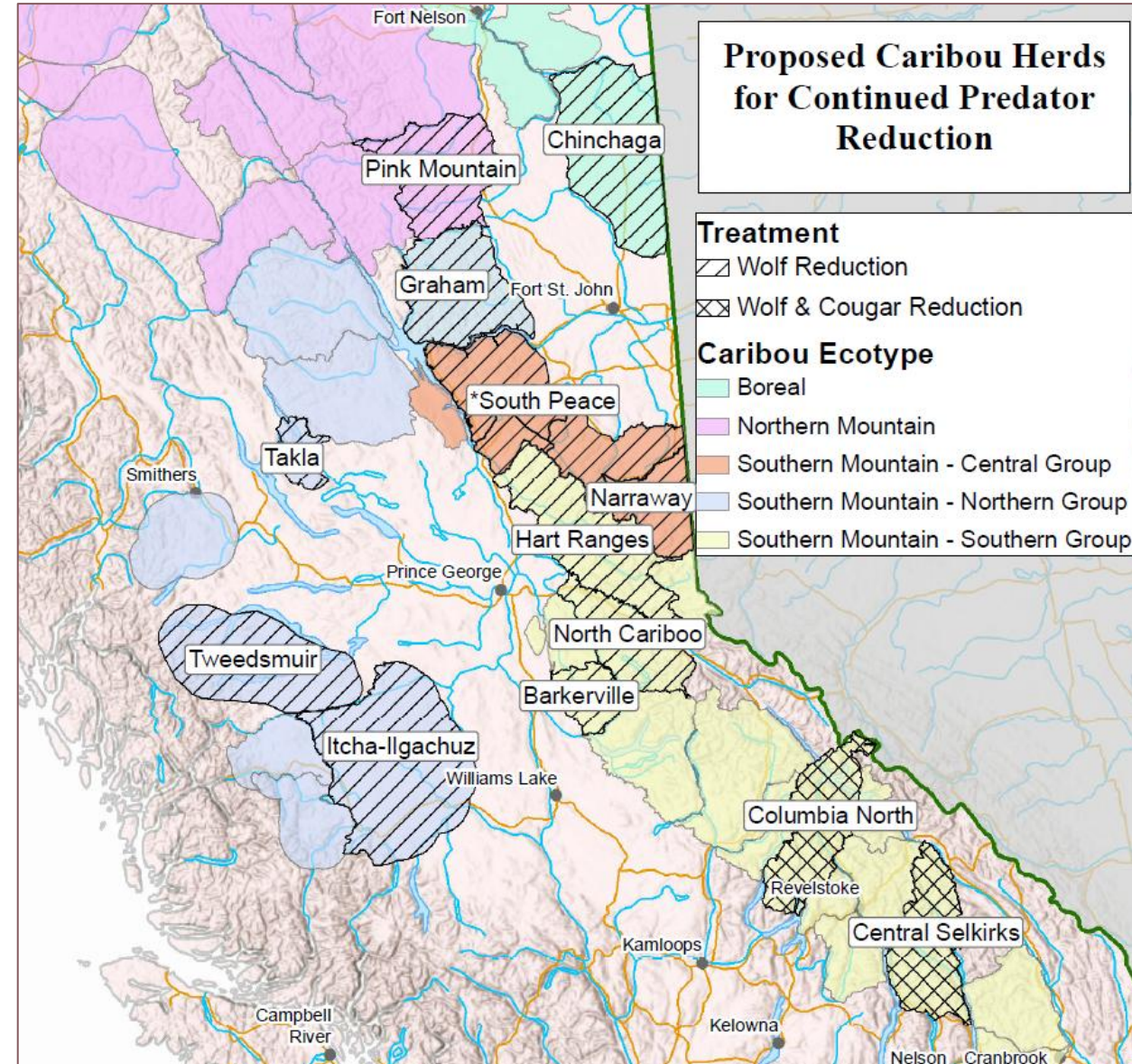
Next Steps & Conversation



Proposal for 5-Year Predator Reduction Implementation

Caribou Science and Knowledge Team has recommended:

- Annual implementation of predator reduction for 11 herds:
 - Central Selkirks
 - Barkerville
 - North Cariboo
 - Hart Ranges
 - Itcha-Ilgachuz
 - Tweedsmuir
 - Takla
 - Graham
 - Klinse-Za
 - Quintette
 - Kennedy Siding/Burnt Pine
- Biennial implementation of predator reduction for 4 herds:
 - Pink Mountain
 - Chinchaga
 - Narraway
 - Columbia North



* Includes Kennedy Siding/Burnt Pine, Klinse-Za, and Quintette herds