

The Great Caribou Rainforest Conservation Area

Harmony Foundation has proposed that the Provincial and Federal governments work with First Nations to create the **Great Caribou Rainforest Conservation Area**. The proposal aligns well with government goals and commitments on mountain caribou, biodiversity, old-growth forests, climate change and Indigenous rights. It articulates practical actions to assist resource-dependent communities diversify their economy.

The Deep-Snow Mountain Caribou of BC's Interior Rainforest are unique in the world and critically endangered. As recently as 20 years ago there were 17 herds. Today only 11 herds remain, and 3 have fewer than 10 while only 5 have more than 100 caribou.

Research shows caribou require large, unbroken tracts of mature forest. Logging and other resource extraction create islands of habitat, depriving them of food and shelter, disrupting migration and increasing predation.

Reliance on killing wolves, penning mothers and calves and other heroic measures have not halted the decline. To the contrary, fewer than 1,400 Deep-Snow Mountain Caribou remain. The science is clear, self-sustaining herds require far greater habitat protection.

To this end, a group of researchers examined the status of the 5 herds with over 100 animals and the overlap of their range with parks and nearby protected areas. All five herds deserve protection; however, the area shown on the map (next page) stood out for its greater feasibility because:

- It is home to 3 of the 5 largest remaining herds: North Cariboo, Wells Gray North & Wells Gray South.
- It is anchored by 3 provincial parks: Bowron Lake, Cariboo Mountains and Wells Gray, and
- Only 14% of the entire proposed conservation area is without some sort of protection.

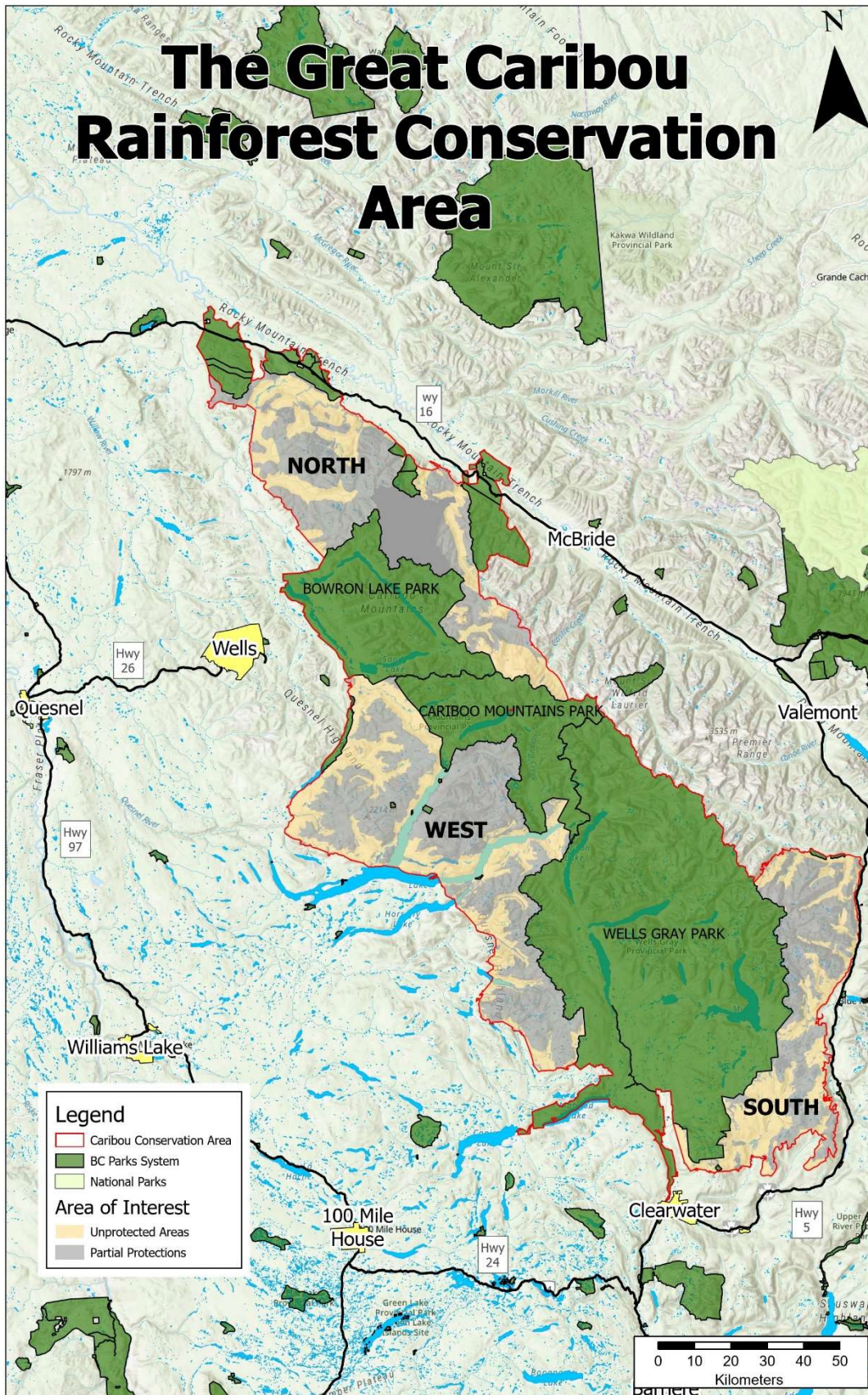
The relatively small addition of land would knit together the patchwork of protections to create the world-class **Great Caribou Rainforest Conservation Area**. Like old-growth in BC's Coastal Rainforest this interior rainforest is biodiversity rich and has high ecological value.

The area's diverse and unique ecology can support environmentally sustainable economic activities such as value-added forest products and Indigenous & eco-tourism. It will attract visitors seeking authentic ecological and cultural experiences and researchers studying climate change & biodiversity.

First Nations with territory within the proposed area have been engaged from the outset and are central to the proposal. They share our goal of changes to forest management to save caribou, protect biodiversity and mitigate climate change. They are stewards of their land. Their leadership and knowledge are critical. Respected advisors also support this science-based proposal.

The decline of Deep-Snow Mountain Caribou raises alarm about their survival and that of this unique ecosystem as well as the future of the people who hope to live here for generations to come. It's time to try something with long-lasting benefits. Good intentions aside, decades of effort and millions of dollars have not reversed the caribou decline because of failure to sufficiently protect their habitat. This proposal offers an innovative and practical path to an inspiring and greatly needed conservation success story for B.C., Canada and the world.





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