



July 13, 2011

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Canadian Boreal Initiative and the Pew Environment Group, regarding woodland caribou. Woodland caribou herds are in decline across Canada's boreal region. History and experience teach us that if nothing is done about this situation it can ripen into a resource management crisis. We have enclosed a briefing paper entitled "Keeping Woodland Caribou in the Boreal Forest: Big Challenge, Immense Opportunity." This analysis was prepared by a panel of internationally recognized scientists and it shows that significantly improved stewardship of woodland caribou is necessary to maintain healthy populations of this magnificent animal, which is so important ecologically, culturally, and economically.

Specifically, these scientists advise that very large protected areas need to be established across Canada's boreal region in order to maintain the levels of intact boreal habitat necessary for this species to persist. They emphasize that the time is now — government-supported actions are needed through land use planning for conservation and sustainable development to ensure that this iconic boreal species remains a part of our future, rather than a memory of our past.

Under your leadership, Canada has established outstanding new national parks and wildlife refuges in the boreal forest, greatly benefitting caribou and many other species, and we hope you will continue such actions in the coming years. Furthermore, looking beyond of protected areas, we recommend that the federal government convene a national dialogue between federal, provincial, and aboriginal leaders to develop a collective plan of action before important options are foreclosed by poorly planned development. Your government's recent commitment to a National Conservation Plan could provide a basis for such collaboration.

We would be pleased to provide a detailed briefing on the analysis, and look forward to the opportunity to discuss this priority matter with your government.

Sincerely,

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Cc: The Honourable Peter Kent, Minister of the Environment
The Honourable John Duncan, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada