

**STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT  
REGARDING  
MANAGEMENT OF  
SNOWMOBILING  
IN MOUNTAIN CARIBOU HABITAT  
IN THE CENTRAL SELKIRK AREA**

**BETWEEN:**

**The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations  
and Rural Development (FLNRORD), Kootenay Region**

**AND:**

**Arrow Lakes Ridge Riders Snowmobile Club (ALRRSC).  
Trout Lake Recreational Club (TLRC),**

**(Collectively referred to as the "Parties")**

**Preamble**

Southern Mountain Caribou are listed as federally Endangered under COSEWIC 2014. The Central Selkirk herd is now the southern most mountain caribou herd in the world. This herd has experienced dramatic declines over the past 20 years (222 to 24, 89%). Currently an estimated 24 caribou remain. Winter recreation, including heliskiing, cat skiing, and snowmobiling, has been identified as one of the current threats to this herd. The risk posed by unmanaged winter recreation has increased on the Central Selkirks herd and requires action as part of the suite of measures being taken under the Provincial Caribou Recovery Initiative. Increasing recruitment and maintaining occupancy of high-quality habitat are essential to this herd's long-term survival.

This Stewardship Management Agreement (SMA) describes the shared stewardship roles and responsibilities of the Parties for the Central Selkirk Snowmobile Management Area (CSSMA) which is subject to *Schedule 7* or the *Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation* under the *Wildlife Act*, as may be amended from time to time (hereby referred to as the "Legislated Closure").

The CSSMA model is a new approach to snowmobile and caribou management in British Columbia. The intent of the CSSMA model is to provide protection to caribou from snowmobile disturbance while at the same time, allow flexibility for snowmobile access by using real-time GPS collared caribou to inform open and closed areas.

The CSSMA area is closed to snowmobiles year-round within the Legislative Closure boundary (Appendix A). Access is granted through exemption permits (s. 3 (2)(a) of the *Permit Regulation*, B.C. Reg. 253/2000) issued to the Parties and their members. Members are bound by permit conditions which required them to view a closure map, which is updated daily, before riding each day to ensure they do not ride within closed areas within the Legislated Closure boundary. The CSSMA is controlled by a computer-based model that is designed to automatically open and close zones within the Legislative Closure boundary based on real-time GPS collar locations from caribou.

Each season the ALRR and the TLRC may host "special events" which may include club rides, poker runs, etc. These events are listed in the minutes of the club, insured through the BCSF and usually posted to the public. For the purpose of this SMA the participants of the event shall be considered permit holders for the day of the event without a membership. To be considered a participant they will have signed in with the club at the event and the club will ensure that participants are aware of surrounding closures in force that day.

This SMA describes the roles, responsibilities of the Parties and process for amendments to the CSSMA model as well as process and timelines for review.

A "Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Management of Snowmobiling in Mountain Caribou Habitat" was signed on March 22, 2007 by the Ministries of Agriculture and Lands (MAL), Environment (MoE), and Tourism, Sport, and the Arts (MoTSA) and the British Columbia Snowmobile Federation (BCSF) (hereby referred to as the Provincial MOU). The Provincial MOU includes the principles, operating practices, research and adaptive management trials, monitoring and inventory, and stewardship outreach protocols applicable to all members of the BCSF

The ALRRSC and the TLRC will work with their members to ensure that the Operating Practices in Caribou Habitats as outlined in the Provincial MOU are adhered to.

The central purpose of this agreement is to provide a mechanism that maintains adequate distance between caribou and winter recreationists so negative impacts to caribou behavior or physiology are avoided.

## **Roles / Responsibilities / Scope**

Roles of the various groups/entities involved in the SMA are as follows:

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Geographic Scope</b>
Arrow Lakes Ridge Riders Snowmobile Club (ALRRSC).	Main agreement proponent	Steward of SMA within scope	Kaslo, New Denver to Highway 31/23 junction
Trout Lake Recreational Club (TLRC),	Main agreement proponent	Steward of SMA within scope	Highway 31/ 23 junction to Kaslo
Harlow Creek Touring Society (HCTS)	Auxiliary proponent	Backcountry advocate within scope	Harlow drainages and access routes, member of ALRRSC
Arrow Lakes Caribou Society (ALCS)	Auxiliary proponent	Facilitate communication, local contact point for FLNRORD, arbitrate locally.	SMA area / Central Selkirks
BC Snowmobile Federation	Auxiliary proponent	Facilitate communication and support online tools and resources for the CSSMA, MOU Signatory	SMA area / Central Selkirks
FLNRORD, Kootenay Boundary Region	Land Manager/ licensor	Negotiation and Approval of SMA, arbitrate issues not solved by local groups.	SMA area / Central Selkirks

The goal is to seek consensus at the local level, first by discussion within the geographic scope among the applicable groups and the province when necessary. ALCS may act as a local facilitator between ALRRSC, TLRC, and HCTS to help with any issues identified. This will increase local communication and should reduce frequency of government conflict resolution.

## **Principles**

The SMA is a local agreement based on common interests in the Nakusp and Trout Lake area. As such, interactions between the Parties should be at the local level and based on respect for participants interests, values, and mandates.

The model was developed by FLNRORD staff with input and support from the Parties.

The model is fully automated and changes to the parameters can be made when necessary without amending the legislation. Where possible, parameters were developed using current caribou collar data (Central Selkirk caribou collared March 2017 to current) and associated analysis.

The model parameters have a significant influence on the model outputs. It is important for the Parties to understand these parameters and that changes to the parameters be agreed upon by all Parties. Several concessions were made in the model ensuring some zones never open and some never close. The key parameters and concessions or “model exemption rules” are listed here below.

Model exemption rules:

- Management area classified into 7 high, 9 moderate, and 49 low classes which represent importance to caribou based on winter GPS collar location densities. As caribou begin utilizing different habitat over time the zone classes will be recalculated.
- An exemption open status is granted if the most recent collar position is not inside or within a specified distance to the zone boundary. The proximity distances for zone classes are as follows: high = 4 km, moderate = 2 km, low = 1 km
- American Creek zone 51, Goat Range Park zone 48 and Lew Creek Ecological Reserve zone 47 are always closed
- Silvercup Ridge zone 70, 71, 72, 19, 21 are always open
- Harlow drainages zone 58, 59, 61 while rated as “low” will use a proximity distance of 0.5 km. The variation in proximity distance is for social purposes (i.e. relative existing use and importance to the users)
- In certain areas, zones boundaries follow roads. The roads remain open unless both zones are closed.
- Closures are sustained for 2 days after collars have cleared the zone proximity designation
- A set of exemption rules by zone prevents the proximity distance from turning on and off zones that are not applicable (e.g. zones on either side of the Lardeau River or zones on either side of Kuskanax Creek)

- The model will use the most recent collar locations with the preceding 10 days (infrequently a collar will not report for several days. Our movement analysis suggests most caribou will be within 2000m of their last location for up to 10 days)

The computer-based model may require periodic updates and technical fixes to ensure it remains functional, accurate, and consistent with principles outlined in this agreement.

Amendments to the following will require notification and agreement among the Parties:

- Model exemption rules
- Zone boundaries

### **Shared Stewardship Roles and Responsibilities**

**1. Sign Content, Acquisition, and Locations**– FLNRORD will provide all signs and materials for installation as listed in Appendix 2. Locations will be accurately GPS'd with locations added to the Appendix 2 map. Zone boundaries within the CCSMA will not be marked by signs as closed area boundaries will follow watershed boundaries, elevations, creeks and roads identifiable in the field with GPS or geo-referenced map. Signs from the Hamling closure pre 2019 will be removed except around the boundary of the American Creek closure as this zone is set to be closed in the model.

**2. Signs**- The ALRRSC and TLRC will be responsible for maintaining (when possible) the signs listed in Appendix 2. Maintenance includes ensuring that signs are readily visible to the public and replacing old or damaged signs.

**3. Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement** – The Conservation Officer Service (COS) will be responsible for compliance and enforcement within the CSSMA. Where practical and possible and without compromising legal enforcement capabilities, the Parties shall endeavor to share information on the CSSMA. If infractions are witnessed by the ALRRSC or TLRC members, they are to report the incident to the Conservation Officer Service (1-877-952-RAPP [7277]). Information that needs to be provided includes the date and time of the incident, the location of the incident (GPS coordinates are preferred), and descriptions of the snowmobile operator and their snowmobile or vehicle including any readily visible registration information. This information is to only be collected when it can be accomplished without entering any of the closure areas.

The Conservation Office Service has committed to provide patrol summaries to the clubs directly through email.

### **4. Grooming**

Expansion of grooming beyond Harlow and Silvercup will not be permitted without review and approval of the Parties.

## **5. Caribou Avoidance Strategies**

It is understood that not all caribou will have collars and if caribou are spotted, or fresh tracks are seen in areas open to snowmobiling, steps will be taken to minimize caribou disturbance as per the MOU. These steps will depend on the circumstances at the time but may include turning around and using an alternate area for the day.

The Parties will report observations through the ALCS caribou recreation subgroup email distribution list and a course of action will be determined and agreed to by the Parties.

**6. Provision of Information to the Public** – The Ministry of FLNRORD will be the Party responsible for the development of digital base maps (as agreed to by the Parties) for the purposes of providing information to the public that accurately show the CSSMA.

## **7. Harlow Hut**

In the event a zone closes and members are overnighing (e.g. at Harlow Hut), those members will be notified by government as deemed necessary, and be able to leave the closed area on their snowmobiles without being prosecuted.

## **Funding**

Annual expenses will be required to run the CSSMA. Examples of annual costs include: internet access for the Trout Lake Community Hall, maintenance to the snowmobileselkirks.ca website and sign replacements (not sign purchase). For the first two seasons 2020/2021 FLNRORD will pay for all expenses and the "Parties" will assume responsibility for expenses for the following years. The CSSMA should be self-sustaining financially considering membership fees are collected. However, we're uncertain what the revenues will amount to in the short term therefore, FLNRORD shall assist the Parties in finding funding from various sources in order to support this SMA if required.

## **Dispute Resolution**

Where a dispute arises related to this SMA, or related to activities or projects undertaken within the scope of this SMA, dispute resolution will be based on sincere attempts to listen to, and understand the position and interests of the other Parties. The Parties will begin by attempting to resolve those issues locally by themselves; including, but not limited to:

- designating one spokesperson per signatory group to convey matters of concern and items of agreement; and
- describing their respective positions on any matters of concern in writing in a timeframe that allows for issue resolution

If the Parties are unable to resolve a dispute themselves, the Parties will then apply the following dispute resolution process:

1. The Director Resource Management with the Ministry of FLNRORD, or his or her nominee, will work with the president of the ALRRSC, TLRC, ALCS, or their nominees, to jointly select a mediator.
2. The mediator will be asked to facilitate a process for working through the issues in dispute and seeking a resolution acceptable to all Parties.
3. Any recommendations made by the mediator are non-binding unless the Parties specify, in advance, that they are to be binding.
4. The costs of a mediator appointed under this provision will be shared equally by the Parties involved.

### **Term**

The Parties agree that the term of this agreement is not defined. However, any Party may request the SMA be opened for review/amendment by submitting a request to the other Parties. The SMA will be a living document able to accommodate the changing needs and uncertainties within the model and the caribou population.

The Central Selkirk caribou herd is at high risk of extirpation within the next 5-10 years without significant management intervention. However, multiple recovery tools are being implemented immediately and we expect to reverse this trend, stabilize and grow this herd within this time period. In either event (i.e. extirpation or recovery), this CSSMA model may no longer be a suitable management method and reviews will facilitate necessary amendments.

The Parties agree to a minimum of two meetings per year which would include a pre-season meeting in early October and post season meetings in early May. A 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting date would be mid-season in February if time permits.

A Review of the performance of this agreement will be made in 5 years (by 31 October 2024), with the goal of identifying implementation benefits, challenges, and recommending opportunities for improvements.

**Signatories:**

W Allard

Date: Feb 15/21

President  
Arrow Lakes Ridge Riders Snowmobile Club

JL Ross March 25, 2021

Date: Feb 01/21

President  
Trout Lake Recreational Club

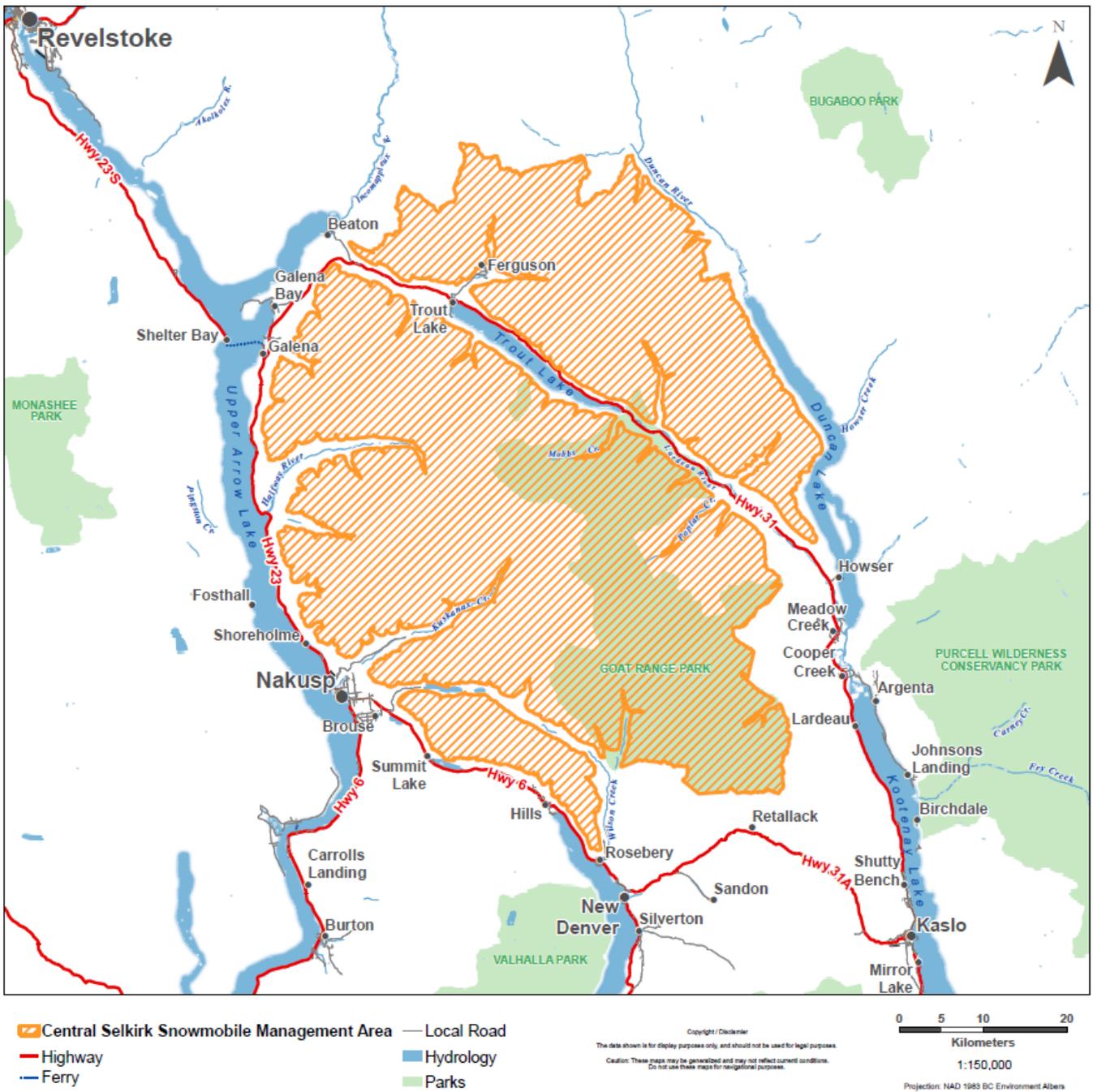
March 24, 2021

JDL  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Resource Management  
Kootenay Boundary Region  
Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource  
Operations and Rural Development

### Appendix 1

## Legislative Closure Boundary Map – referred to as the Central Selkirk Snowmobile Management Area.



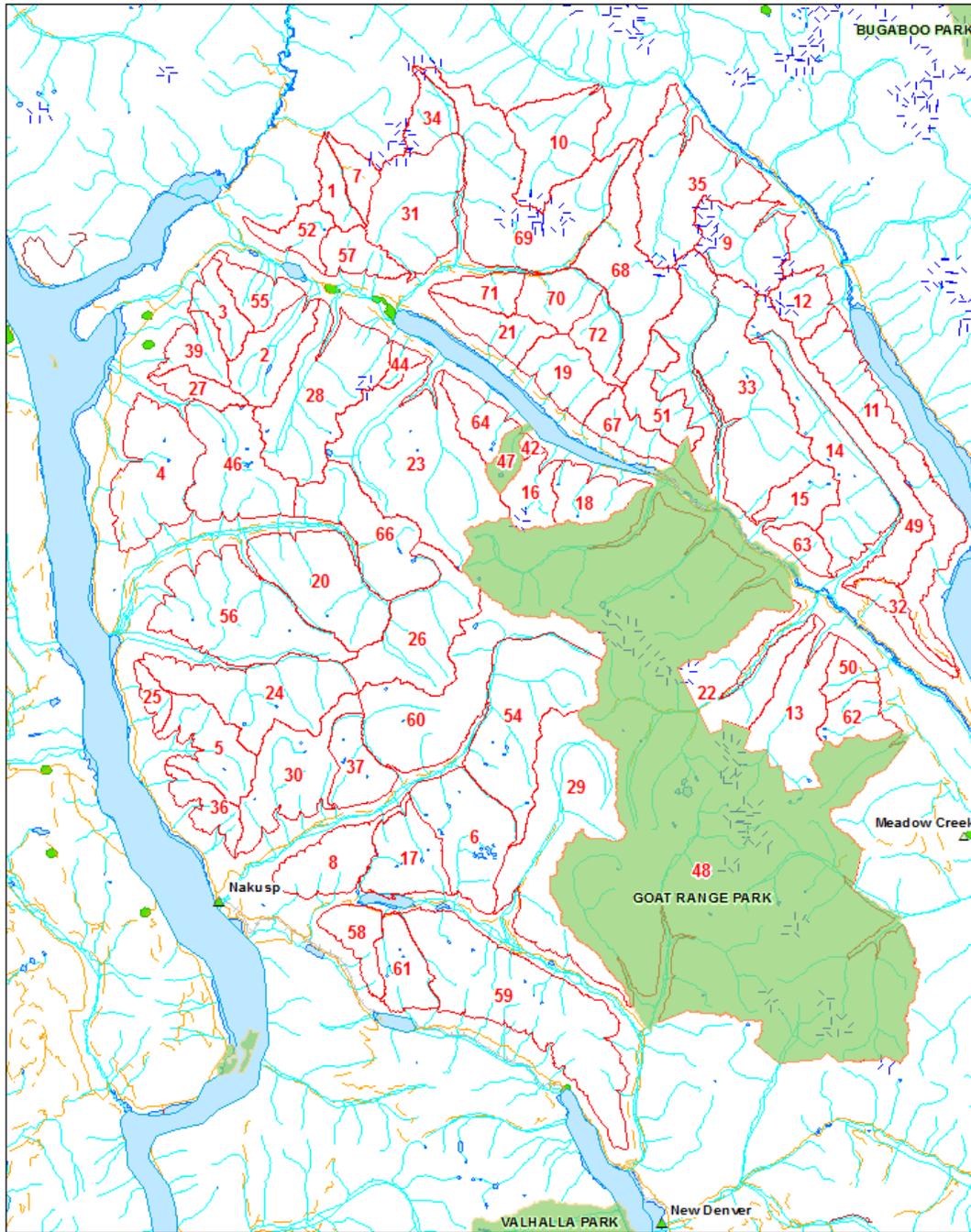
**Appendix 2.**

Sign Locations as of March 2020. Permanent signs will be installed before winter 2020/2021.



### Appendix 3.

Zone map and numbers as of January 2021.



0 2.5 5 10 15 20 Kilometers

Zone Boundaries