APPENDIX B.

United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Idaho Panhandle National Forests | 3815 Schreiber Way Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

File Code: 2670
Date: SEP 18 2008

Rich Torquemada
Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Upper Columbia Office
11103 East Montgomery Drive
Spokane, WA 99206

Dear Rich:

The purpose of this letter is to clarify caribou management on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNFs) and will be used in the consultation on the Idaho Roadless Rule.

The Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) Threatened and Endangered Species Standard a. states results of research regarding habitat of threatened and endangered species will be incorporated into management direction as it becomes available. The IPNFs are committed to using best science in the design and implementation of projects in the Caribou Recovery Zone. The IPNFs currently are utilizing the best science for seasonal habitats as described in Apps and Kinley, 2007. As new science becomes available we will consider it in consultation with you.

The commitment to using best science carries over to the cumulative effects analysis used for activities proposed in caribou habitat. The LRMP references Appendix HH, which consists of a Cumulative Effects Model. The LRMP does not require the use of this model, but rather includes it in the Appendix as an analytic tool for use in conducting evaluations. This model has been updated based on best science to employ some qualitative factors rather than un-validated quantitative factors. The cumulative effects analyses using the current approach will be done in consultation with you at the project level.

You have inquired about how the forest-wide old growth standard relates to Caribou habitat and how the forest intends to manage old growth in caribou habitat. Within Management Area 7, Caribou Management Areas, the standard is "Existing all-aged old-growth cedar/hemlock stands are to be retained". The forest-wide standard is to maintain at least 10 percent of the forested portion of the IPNF as old growth. To assure the public we are meeting the forest-wide standard we have allocated old growth stands across the forest totaling 12.3 percent.

The IPNFs do not implement timber harvest that removes allocated old growth stands. The 2005 and 2006 Forest Plan Monitoring Report provides a more complete discussion of the management of old growth. Our intent is to follow the 2001 Biological Opinion, the

LRMP, and the current practice of using best science to maintain and manage old growth stands that are suitable caribou habitat within the Caribou Recovery Zone. Of interest to you is that over 60,000 acres of old growth has been allocated within the Caribou Recovery Area.

Sincerely,

RANOTTA K. MCNAIR
Forest Supervisor

cc: Joan E Dickerson, Shanda DeKome