

# News Bulletin

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## **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Enters into Agreement with Kootenai Tribe to Benefit Unique Population of Woodland Caribou** *Revised Draft Plan to Chart Path to Recovery for Transboundary Population*

BOISE, Idaho – Enhanced conservation of the southern Selkirk Mountains population of woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) is on the horizon after a formal agreement was struck between the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (Tribe) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to revise the recovery plan for the southern Selkirk Mountains population of caribou.

The Tribe will lead preparation of the draft revised recovery plan, while the Service will participate in the technical and policy review and provide financial support for the undertaking. Conservation partners such as, but not limited to, the Kalispel Tribe; Ktunaxa Nation Council; Idaho Department of Fish and Game; Idaho Department of Lands; Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; US Forest Service; Bonner and Boundary Counties; and the Province of British Columbia will also contribute technical and policy support.

"This is a good example of government participation that saves costs and achieves conservation more efficiently and effectively," said Gary Aitken, Jr., Chair of the Kootenai Tribe.

Upon receiving the draft revisions to the plan from the Tribe, the Service will make it available for public comment, address comments received, and adopt and publish a final revised plan; expected in 2016.

"This cooperative approach will ensure stakeholder involvement, make the best use of technical experts familiar with caribou conservation, and will help all of us prepare a plan for caribou recovery more efficiently," said Mike Carrier, state supervisor of the Service's Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office. "We applaud the efforts of the Kootenai Tribe and other federal, state, and tribal partners and other participating stakeholders for their contributions towards the recovery of this imperiled species."

The southern Selkirk Mountains population of woodland caribou occupies high-elevation habitat in the Selkirk Mountains of northern Idaho, northeastern Washington, and southern British Columbia. The population is currently listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act with designated critical habitat. In 2014, the Service developed a proposed rule to amend the listing to recognize the Southern Mountain Caribou Distinct

Population Segment of woodland caribou, which includes the southern Selkirk Mountains population. For more information on southern Selkirk Mountains caribou conservation, visit: <http://www.fws.gov/idaho/Caribou.html>.

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