

Caribou/Snowmobile Aerial Monitoring Report

Of February 26, 2014

Methods

An aerial over-flight was conducted of the Southern Selkirk Mountains woodland caribou recovery area to monitor snowmobile user compliance with existing snowmobile use restrictions and to monitor and locate caribou and other important wildlife use areas in relation to areas with snowmobile use restrictions. To conduct aerial monitoring a Cessna 172 fixed wing type aircraft was utilized.

To accurately locate boundaries of areas with snowmobile use restrictions in place, a laptop computer running a geographical information-mapping program (Arc view ver. 3.3) was utilized. In addition to mapping software, the existing arc view extension, DNR gamin, was utilized to connect a handheld GPS system to computer for real-time mapping. In addition to a pilot, a single observer/recorder was utilized.

Conditions

Weather conditions were clear throughout the survey area. Temperatures ranged about 25 to 35 degrees Fahrenheit within the survey area, no wind. The flight originated and concluded from the community airport in Priest River, Idaho. The flight began at approximately 1030 and ended at approximately 1400; total flight time over the survey area was approximately 3.5 hours.

Results

Snowmobile Use (only snowmobile use within designated closure areas is reported)

Snowy Top Lake/International Border

Snowmobile tracks on Big Snowy top Lake. Snowmobiles were accessing lake for international border vis BC forest road system. Snowmobiles were in addition to using areas in B.C. were using areas within U.S. which were closed.

Continental Mine

Snowmobile tracks were located north of the Continental mine within the designated closure.

Cow Creek

Snowmobile tracks were observed within the Cow Creek drainage and specifically 'high-marking' within the back portion of the drainage in the caribou closure and more specifically the court identify caribou movement corridor.

West Fork Cabin

Snowmobile use was observed around West-Fork Cabin and within most of the forested openings within the vicinity of the cabin.

Two Mouth, Beehive, Harrison Lakes

Observed recent 'over the snow machine' activity over Two Mouth Lake and extending southward to Beehive and Harrison Lake. By attempting to follow the tracks for Two Mouth Lake to their point of origin, it appeared that they originated from the Lower Two Mouth drainage near the East Side Road. It was estimated that there were four machines total and they were the snow-motorcycle type as evident by the snow track pattern.

Wildlife

Wolverine tracks were observed within two locations in the upper portion of Smith Creek.

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Figure 1. Snow-cycle tracks on Harrison Lake.



Figure 2. Snow-cycle tracks on Two Mouth Lakes.



Figure 3.
Snowmobile tracks
within headwaters of
Cow Creek.



Figure 4.
Snowmobiler within
designated closure on
Continental Mt.



Figure 5. Potential wolverine tracks in Upper Smith Creek.



Figure 6. Potential Wolverine Tracks in upper Smith Creek.