

Ecological Assessments and Caribou Impact Mitigation Strategies



Project Profile

SynergyAspen was engaged to assess wildlife presence/absence in the area of two disturbed sites and draft a *Caribou Mitigation Plan* and *Reclamation Program Recommendations* together with amendments. The sites were located in the Milligan Core Caribou Winter Range (R9) in the Doig River Consultative Area.

Issue

In order to accomplish this goal, we enhanced and reclaimed disturbed areas while limiting destruction of valuable habitat for species of concern in the area. In this case, ungulate species, primarily caribou, were the species of concern.

Solution

We drafted a caribou enhancement plan to direct the client on how to conduct site assessment and reclamation activities in a way that would not harm or harass the local caribou population. With the client, we initiated consultation with the Doig River First Nation Community, with the objective to outline the intended reclamation plan and to provide opportunity for collaborative discussion in regards to any specific concerns or requests.

A SynergyAspen Biologist conducted a site visit, and documented the habitat components that are necessary for caribou survival. The presence of large areas of well-established terrestrial lichen growth led to amendments to the original reclamation plan so as not to damage this main caribou winter forage.

Outcome

If the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Natural Gas (Reclamation division) approve these new reclamation objectives, it will result in preservation of a well-established winter food source for the local caribou population and provide a cost savings to our client.