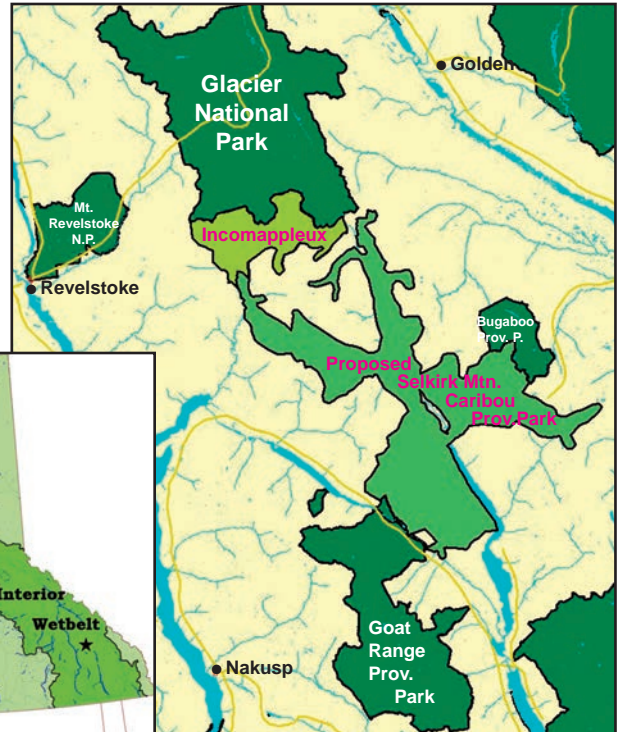


Proposed Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park

A 156,460-hectare park proposal for protection of remnant stands of old-growth Inland Temperate Rainforest. It has been designed to connect three existing parks, in order to maintain grizzly bears, a herd of endangered mountain caribou and many other species. It contains scattered old-growth forests that are amongst the very few oldest, with the largest trees, in the interior of British Columbia. **NO FORESTS LIKE THESE EXIST IN BC INTERIOR PARKS TODAY.**

Reports done for or by Glacier National Park acknowledge that the park is ecologically incomplete and too small to maintain large wildlife such as grizzly bears and mountain caribou. To the south, the grizzly bears of Goat Range Provincial Park must travel outside the park to feed on spawning fish in the autumn, and to cross the river and climb the adjacent mountain range. In winter, the resident herd of mountain caribou uses our proposed extension of Goat Range PP more than the existing park, itself. This proposed expansion will make both existing parks more able to maintain their wildlife.



This proposal asks the BC government and Environment Canada to cooperate in expanding two provincial parks and one national park, which could be connected following parts of four rivers.

Expanding existing parks can help mountain caribou

Mountain caribou are close to extinction because low- and mid-elevation old-growth forest is critical to their survival, yet these are the very forests that corporations want to log. To avoid protecting more forest in parks, claims have been made that parks can't protect mountain caribou. Glacier and Mount Revelstoke National Parks are used as examples because the nearby Columbia South herd is almost extinct. But federal maps of mountain caribou habitat show that these parks contain very little caribou habitat. The same is true of Goat Range Provincial Park, however, much critical mountain caribou habitat lies outside of and between these parks.

The reason is that low- to mid-elevation forest was systematically excluded from parks for logging. And much of it was logged. Scientists have now warned the federal government that there is an imminent danger that BC's whole mountain caribou ecotype could be wiped out. The cards are now on the table. Either protect significant amounts of lower elevation habitat, or let it be known to the world that BC has knowingly wiped out a genetically unique large mammal found nowhere else in the world, in its greed to profit logging corporations.

Only time will tell whether we have already logged too much to save the caribou. But cedar-hemlock forests in this region harbour more than 40 other species at risk, according to BC's Conservation Data Centre. We must preserve what little old-growth remains or we could lose many more species; and the remnant ancient forests themselves are a world heritage



Primeval Inland Temperate Rainforest in the Incomappleux wilderness south of Glacier National Park. The tree is approximately 1,800 years old.

Outstanding Conservation Values in the Park Proposal



Rare Antique Inland Temperate Rainforest

The forest at left lies in a 30,000-hectare wilderness in the Incomappleux Valley, adjacent to Glacier National Park. The largest trees have been aged at 1,800 years old. Scientists say the forest may have been growing uninterrupted since the last Ice Age. A Ministry of Forests report calls it a “rare forest type of global significance”. A biologist has called it “a Notre Dame of biodiversity”. It harbours hundreds of lichen species alone, as well as many rare mushrooms and plants. A number of other old-growth forests in the park proposal are perhaps not as wet or as old, but the big trees in all these forests are a treasure in themselves, and inspire great awe in those who experience them.



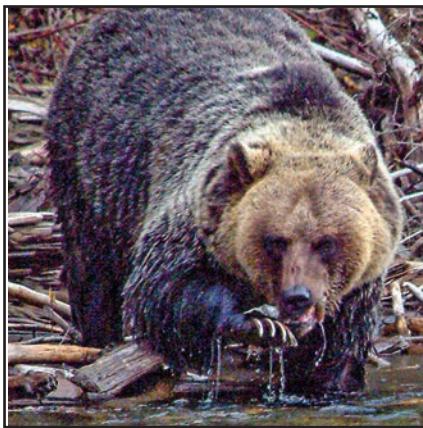
Mountain Caribou - Central Selkirk Herd

The Central Selkirk herd had 98 animals when the park proposal was launched in 2005. Today it has only 28. About 50% of the park proposal is provincial Ungulate Winter Range for caribou, and closed to logging. Virtually all of it is federally designated critical or critical matrix habitat. According to the *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* and supporting policy documents, these areas should not be logged, yet matrix critical habitat for this herd has recently been or has ongoing logging at several known points. This proposal would preserve a key travel route and expanse for preventing isolation of the herd.

Grizzly Bear Connectivity and Grizzly Bear Viewing

Studies have shown that a drain on grizzly bear populations is spreading northerly from the southern border of BC. In the Selkirk Mountains, the number of grizzly bears improves around the Goat Range Provincial Park, but the park lies near the edge of the zone where populations are threatened. The bears leave the park to feed in avalanche paths outside the park boundary in spring, find denning locations, and in autumn to fish in the Lardeau River. The fishing areas attract crowds to watch the bears and a number of small businesses offer grizzly bear viewing *outside the park* but near the boundaries. The end of the grizzly bear trophy hunt will help protect these bears, but the BC government also committed to implementing the recommendations of the recent Auditor General’s report on grizzly bear management:

“there has been little effort to address the issue of connectivity for grizzly bears ...Better connectivity of the parks system would create corridors for the extensive range that grizzly bears inhabit....” — Auditor General’s Report 2017



In 1984 a report by Environment Canada biologists noted that the intact area of the Incomappleux Valley outside of Glacier National Park was critical for the support of the grizzly bear population and ought to be protected.

Protecting Critical Habitat and Achieving Connectivity

To achieve habitat connectivity, the VWS park proposal follows stretches of the Lardeau, Westfall, Duncan and Incomappleux Rivers. These rivers host spawning runs of blue-listed bull trout and Kokanee salmon which support key fisheries in Kootenay Lake and the Arrow Reservoir. Although the river corridors have been clearcut, they connect intact slopes and side valleys.

Old-growth in these areas survived 70 years of industrial logging because it was too remote from the mills or on terrain too rugged to be economical for building roads.

Although about half of the proposal is Ungulate Winter Range (UWR) for caribou, this protection is only partial, weak and not permanent. Some parts of the UWR can be logged for the next 20 years. Meanwhile, federally designated critical matrix habitat outside the park proposal is being logged in various places. Within the proposal, logging is ongoing in the Duncan Valley near where caribou are seen nearly every year in census flights. This logging is under the auspices of the BC government’s BC Timber Sales, run by the Ministry of Forests.