



PRINCE ALBERT GRAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

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PAGC Leadership Disputes Province's Statements on the Woodland Caribou

Prince Albert. PAGC's leadership is deeply concerned by the province's position that the Woodland caribou are considered a "subspecies" of the Boreal caribou and do not deserve protection under the *Species at Risk Act*, as reported by the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* ([The complicated relationship between the provincial government and woodland caribou conservation](#), April 25, 2019). The statements were made during a speech by Saskatchewan's Ministry of Environment Assistant Deputy Minister Kevin Murphy in Prince Albert.

"Despite the province's assertion that the Woodland Caribou are not an important food source for First Nations, the Denesuline people of northern Saskatchewan have relied and continue to rely on the caribou as an important food source," said PAGC Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte. "It is important that we continue measures to conserve and protect the Woodland caribou and its habitat rather than putting them at risk in the name of economic and national resource development."

ADM Murphy's remarks were provided as part of the Ministry of Environment's report on the ["State of the Environment 2019: A Focus on Forests."](#) The report read:

"Woodland caribou **do not contribute directly to the economy** of Saskatchewan as it is not a game species for which licences are issued. Caribou are an indicator species that help represent the overall condition of ecosystem health and ecological integrity.

Due to woodland caribou being ranked nationally as a threatened species, allowing further decline of either the population or its habitat could result in emergency orders that **would have a significant effect on Saskatchewan's northern industrial sectors.**

The goal of the Saskatchewan Woodland Caribou Range Plan is to achieve and maintain a self-sustaining population by managing habitat availability **while allowing for continued economic activity in northern Saskatchewan,**" (p. 39)

PAGC further states that First Nations must participate in the development and in the long-term management of the Recovery Strategy and the Range Plan for Woodland Caribou in Saskatchewan.

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