



**Aseniwuche Winewak
Nation of Canada**

Aseniwuche Winewak Nation Perspective on Caribou

Presented by Rachelle McDonald, Executive Director
November 12, 2014



Aseniwuche
Winewak
Nation of
Canada

*As Caretakers of the Earth,
we commit to work in unity,
in faith, for life.*

Our concern for the Woodland Caribou is founded in the belief that Creator made all things, that all living things have a right to be here.

We believe in the Medicine Wheel, that wellness lies in the balance of all things.

We believe we must treat the land with respect, that we must have respect for all living creatures.

Traditional knowledge provides wisdom and direction on how to treat Mother Earth.



Traditional Knowledge,
learned by countless generations on the land,
has a vital role in managing a sustainable landscape.



It is listening to our Elders when they tell us
that we need to think of our children and grandchildren.



Traditional knowledge is inclusive: it includes qualities that can be measured such as which creeks contain spawning bull trout, and immeasurable qualities like knowing moose hide makes more durable moccasins. Traditional knowledge considers not hunting an animal when it is endangered and keeping an eye on fur bearing populations in consecutive seasons. Traditional knowledge is using every part of an animal, and knowing the importance of fire to healthy forests.

It is knowing where and when to hunt, how to skin a moose, how to prepare meat, how to tan a hide, how to make tools, how to survive.



**It is knowing that all things are interconnected;
one thing can't be changed without changing the whole.**



It is sharing our stories (data and hypotheses), sharing our history (cumulative research), because we have always been here.

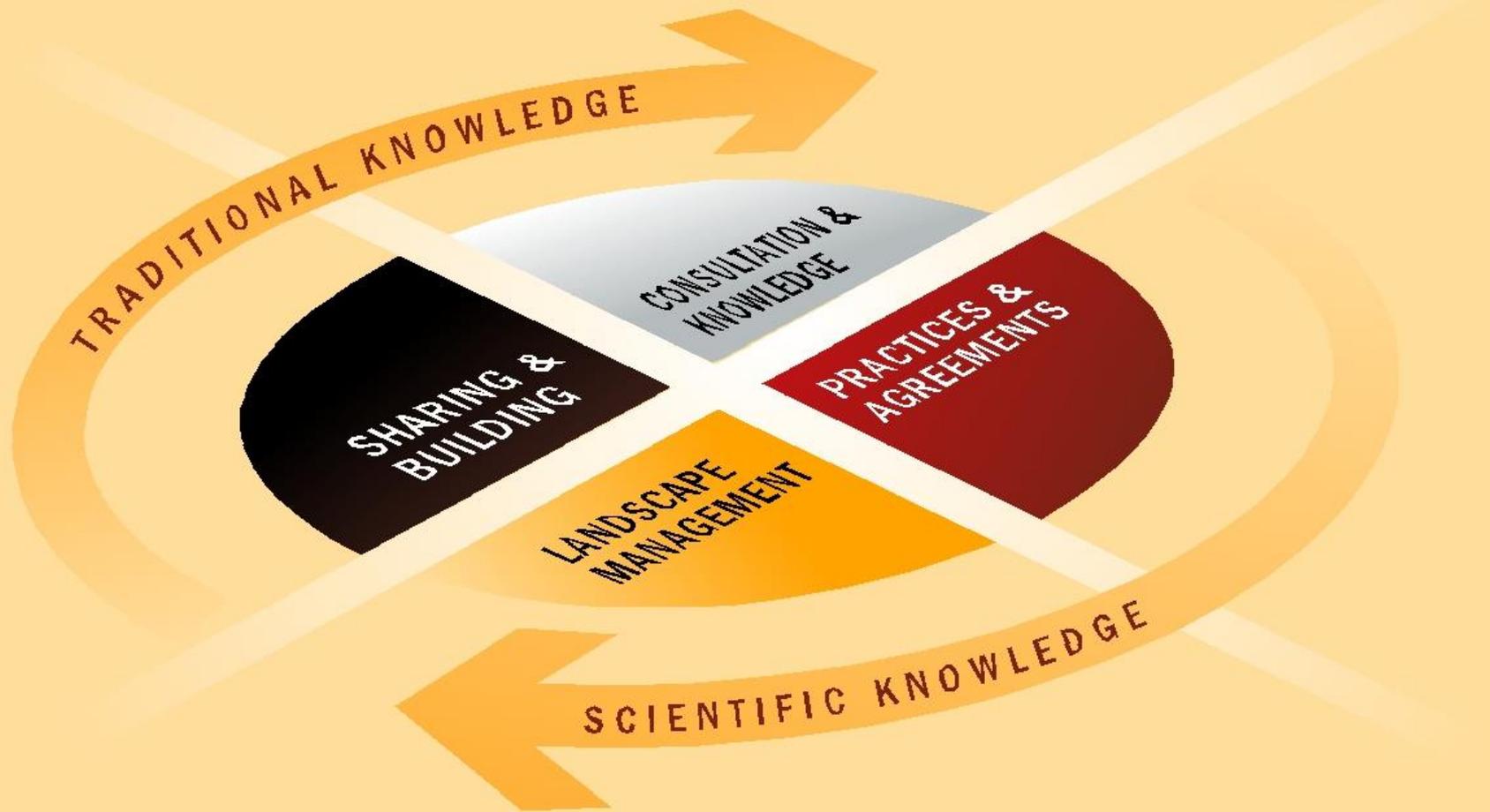


**It is having a vision for the future;
knowing that our collective future depends on our cooperation.**

**The integration of
traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge
can reduce environmental impact
and create balance.**

**Sustainability and integration of knowledge
are not new concepts to Aboriginal people.**

**Understanding these concepts is a part of who we are.
It is how we survived on the land.**



This is the framework for the AWN Consultation Program.

The opportunity to share our traditional knowledge, the knowledge of the Aseniwuche Winewak, is what motivates us to find our voice.

The rapid encroachment of development and urbanization is creating pressures on the environment unknown to previous generations.



Several key species, including caribou, are in serious decline in our traditional lands. This concerns us for many reasons. We know the absence of one species ultimately changes the environment. The loss of these species also prevents us from practicing our traditional way of life.



**Our people lived and moved through out our traditional lands;
accumulating vast amounts of knowledge.**



Our people traditionally hunted caribou for food and other items made from the animals.

Our Elders

**In their life time, our
Elders have seen a
dramatic decline in the
Woodland Caribou
population.**





“Thousands of Caribou used to roam here” Tommy W.

AWN's Response to Declining Caribou Populations

- **Our people voluntarily stopped harvesting Caribou.**
- **Our people voluntarily work with AESRD to share information of Caribou.**
- **For decades, our Elders have been advocating for the preservation of Caribou to anyone who would listen.**
- **AWN as an organization has been active in Caribou recovery working groups.**
- **Caribou is one of the top considerations, in our consultation process with industry.**

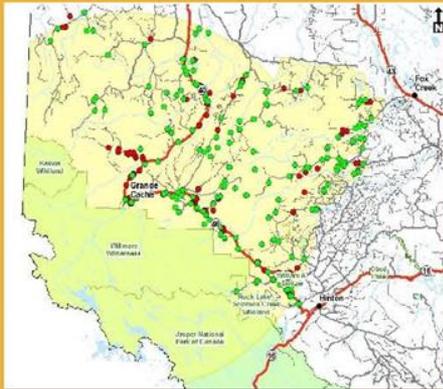
Gates and Barriers



Sign posted near gate. Gate was open at the time.

Route gates and barriers are just one tool currently used for Wildlife Management. It is believed that by installing gates and/or barriers on certain routes, on-highway vehicle traffic can be reduced.

As part of the Caribou Patrol Project, patrol crews completed surveys of existing gates and barriers. In total, 347 surveys were performed. The data collected through these surveys indicate that close to 65% of gates or barriers were either open or unlocked at the time of the survey. A small number of closed gates were reported to be ineffective in stopping on-highway vehicle traffic.



Map showing gates and barriers surveyed. The green dots depict open and/or unlocked gates/barriers. The red dots depict closed and locked gates/barriers.

Planning for the Future

The Caribou Patrol Project is intended to be a multi-year program. Initial feedback from partners has been positive. Suggestions for areas to improve upon in future years are:

- ⇒ increase lead-in/planning time
- ⇒ plan for additional training
- ⇒ increase and expand the public and industry education component
- ⇒ collect additional data specifically regarding extent of road use
- ⇒ provide more direction to crews

"On behalf of the FLMF members, it was gratifying to work with the AWN staff and community to get some caribou recovery action on the ground with very short notice. I am hopeful that AWN and FLMF are successful in continuing and improving on this initial project in the future."

— Wayne Thorp,
Managing Director, FLMF



Caribou Patrol truck and crew member



Caribou Patrol Zone

Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment
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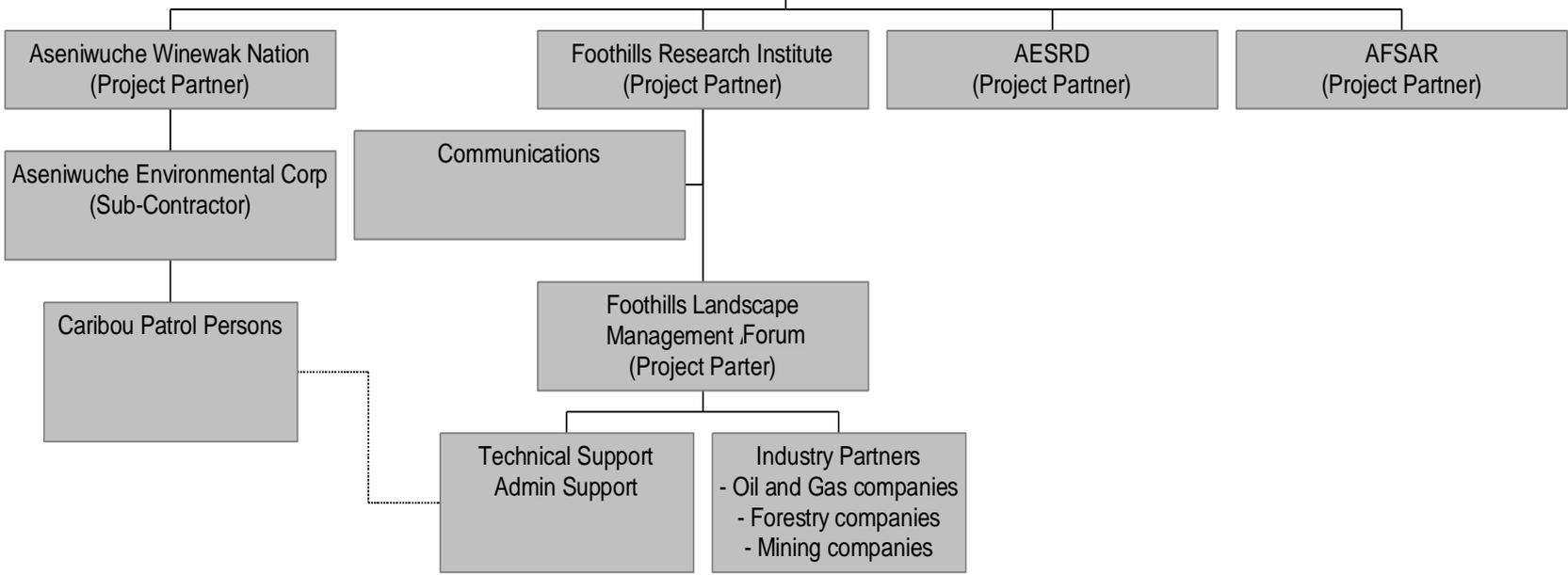
Alberta Government



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Engaging AWN in the Recovery of Woodland Caribou



How our Caribou Cowboys Can Make a Difference

- **Be the eyes and ears of AWN, so we have a better idea of what is really happening out there**
- **Safely and gently move caribou off of roadways**
- **Increase awareness about the fragile state of local caribou herds by handing out information sheets and talking about the program**
- **Collect information about wildlife and human activity on the land that will help AWN, FRI and AESRD determine if gates and road restrictions are reducing human impacts on caribou and other wildlife**

Knowledge is Power

- **Data collected by Caribou Patrols will underpin other efforts being made by AWN to protect vital caribou habitat**
- **Data collected by Caribou Patrols will provide balance to other data being collected – it will include the perspective of the traditional people of the land**
- **Items of information may be small but when put together they may hold the key to longer, more sustainable solutions**
- **Caribou need a champion – we can fulfill that role. Why? Because it is our responsibility.**

Our Elders tell us that we have to speak for the animals because they have no voice.

We speak at every opportunity:

- **Athabasca River Basin Study**
- **North Eastern Slope Strategy**
- **Foothills Research Institute**
- **Alberta Caribou Committee**
- **West Central Alberta Caribou Committee**
- **Foothills Landscape Management Forum**
- **Jasper National Park Aboriginal Forum**
- **Numerous industry led projects and activities such as the Suncor penning project**
- **Numerous consultation and regulatory processes such as Kinder Morgan and Enbridge pipelines**



We can't let Caribou become a story of the past.



**We want our children to live the life of their ancestors,
the best way they can.**



The choice is ours. Where are we going? What can we do?



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“Thank you” for your time.



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