

RESTORATION AND MONITORING OF CARIBOU HABITAT IN ALBERTA



Canada's woodland caribou populations are declining, largely due to habitat loss and climate change. Industrial activity across the boreal forest has created an extensive network of linear disturbances (e.g., seismic lines) that increase predator hunting efficiency and access into caribou ranges, disrupting these delicate ecosystems. Habitat recovery is essential to recover caribou populations, and long-term monitoring offers insights into how successful different restoration measures and treatments are over time.

GOALS OF RESTORATION

Supporting a return to forest cover



Reducing human use and travel

Reducing wolf hunting efficiency



RESTORATION TREATMENTS

Line deactivation and access control

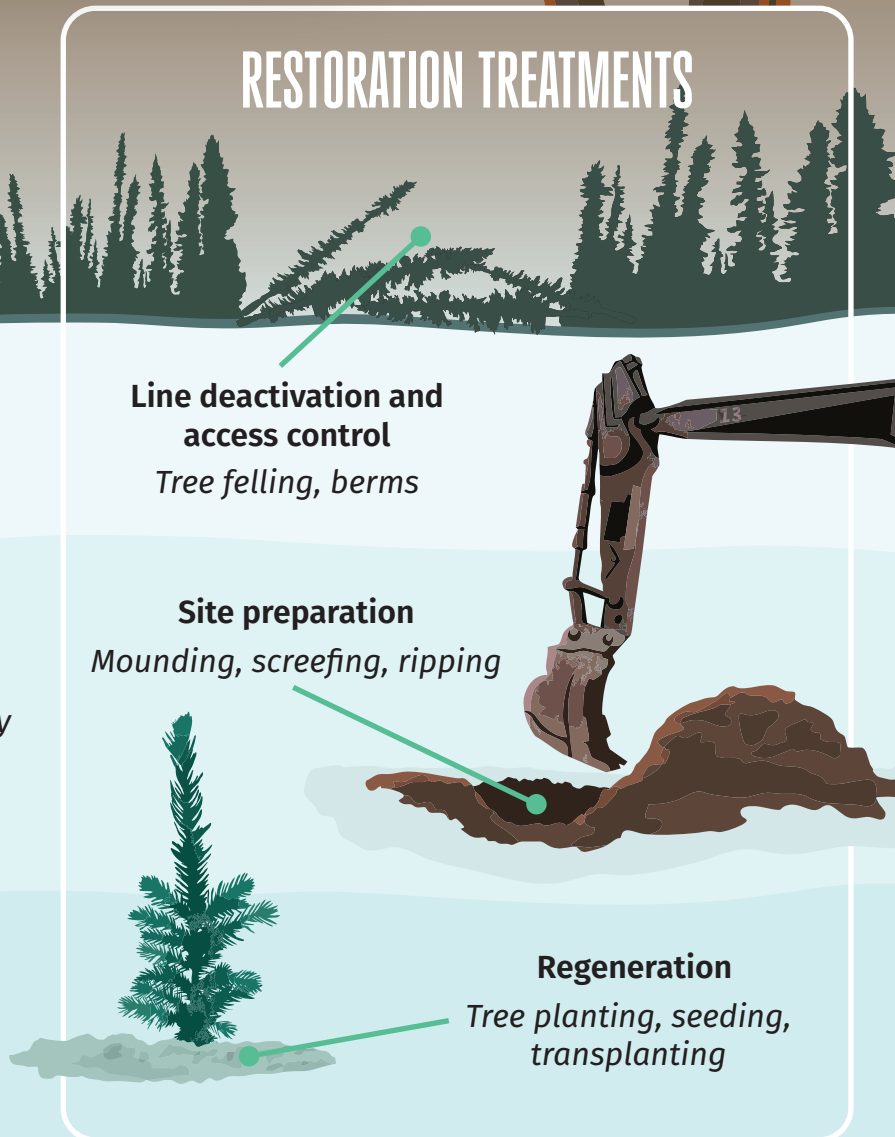
Tree felling, berms

Site preparation

Mounding, screefing, ripping

Regeneration

Tree planting, seeding, transplanting



In 2024, the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI), an independent scientific organization, began third-party monitoring efforts for Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (EPA) to track restoration success. This project works alongside the Government of Alberta's Caribou Habitat Recovery Program.

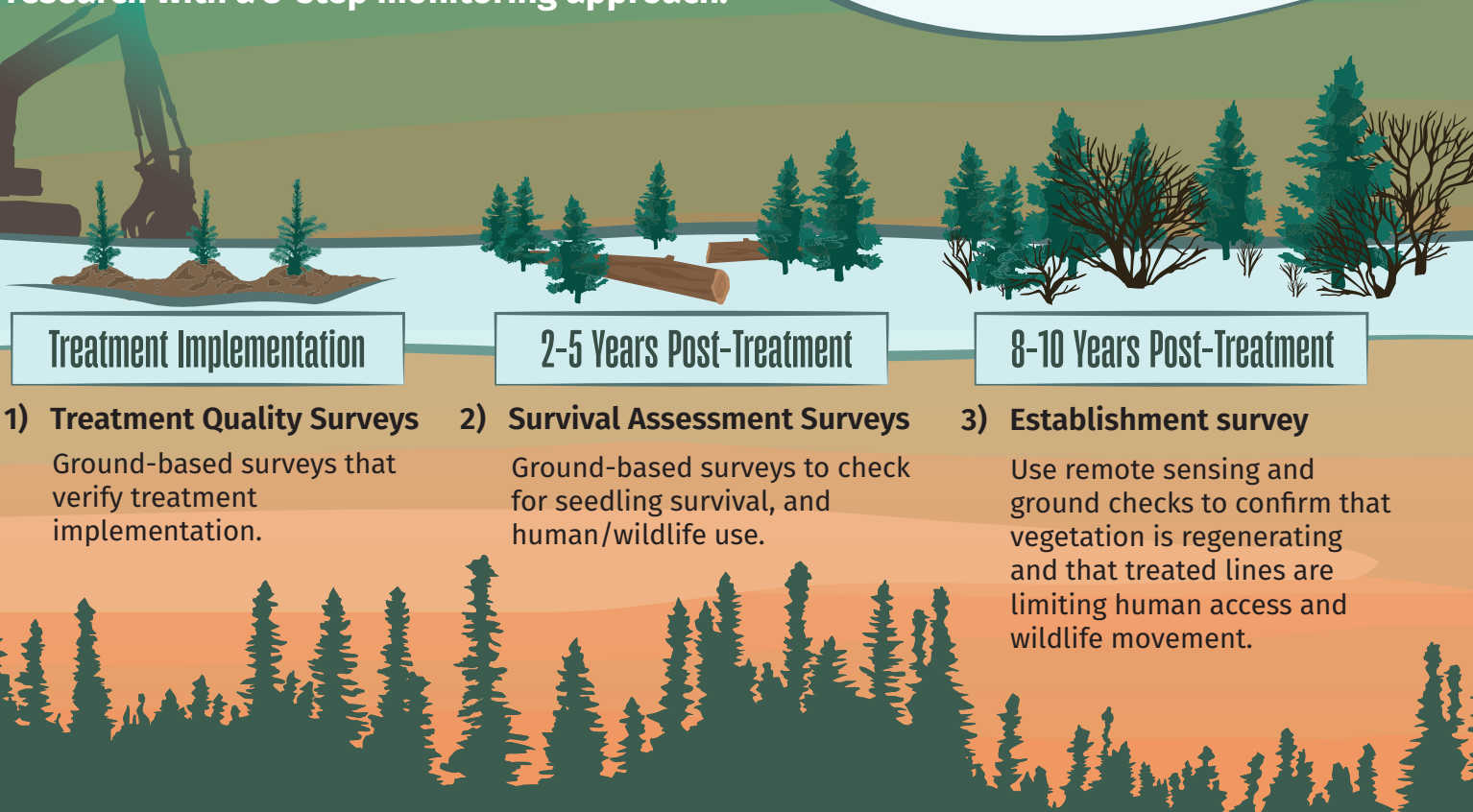
Caribou Habitat Recovery Program (CHRP)

- Led by the Government of Alberta
- Assesses and treats legacy seismic lines

Caribou Habitat Restoration Monitoring (CHRM)

- Led by the ABMI
- Long-term monitoring of treatment response
- Supports improving restoration treatments over time as we learn more about what works best for caribou

The CHRM aims to fill blank spaces in the research with a 3-step monitoring approach:



1) Treatment Quality Surveys

Ground-based surveys that verify treatment implementation.

2) Survival Assessment Surveys

Ground-based surveys to check for seedling survival, and human/wildlife use.

3) Establishment survey

Use remote sensing and ground checks to confirm that vegetation is regenerating and that treated lines are limiting human access and wildlife movement.

Caribou are not out of the woods yet when it comes to population recovery. Restoration is an essential step to improving the quality of caribou habitat. Through meaningful collaboration, long-term monitoring of restoration success, and iterative research, this project hopes to make a better future for woodland caribou.

For more information, contact abmiinfo@ualberta.ca or visit abmi.ca



Woodland caribou have tremendous cultural importance to many Indigenous Peoples. The ABMI and EPA are working together to build active collaborations with Indigenous communities in restoration monitoring.

