

THE CLEAR CUT

Janet Sumner: 0:00

Welcome to *The Clear Cut*. Hi, I'm Janet Sumner, Executive Director at Wildlands League.

Kaya Adleman: 0:08

And I'm Kaya Adelman, Carbon Manager at Wildlands League.

Janet Sumner: 0:14

Wildlands League is a Canadian conservation organization working on protecting the natural world.

Kaya Adleman: 0:21

The Clear Cut is bringing to you the much-needed conversation on Canadian forest management and how we can better protect one of Canada's most important ecosystems, as our forests are reaching a tipping point.

Janet Sumner: 0:41

All right, Kaya. This is Episode 4 on Caribou.

Kaya Adleman: 0:45

Wow, that's a lot

Janet Sumner: 0:47

Yeah, no, really two with just Justina Ray from WCS on the science of Caribou. And then we've had two episodes with Anna Baggio, the Conservation Director for Wildlands League, and this is the second of those two episodes talking about policy and how regulations and policy sort of work with federal laws and provincial laws, and how they should work and how you sort of put the science into the regulatory and the legislation frameworks to actually hopefully make sense of them and make them do something real in the real world. It's not just enough to have the science.



Kaya Adleman: 1:26

That makes sense.

Janet Sumner: 1:27

I just got confused there.

Kaya Adleman: 1:29

No, that makes sense to me. You're saying that we have the science and then we're applying policy to it in order to address the issues and the questions that are being raised from the science. And then we're seeing as we heard in our episode with Anna last week we're seeing how sometimes the policy frame can kind of get jarbled up in the hands of regulators.

Janet Sumner: 2:00

That's a great word jarbled up. So do you know anybody in your world that actually would want to do like policy stuff like this, Kaya?

Kaya Adleman: 2:11

Oh yeah, so funny that you should ask, Janet. I think policy work is very interesting. I actually went to university with some people who are currently working on environmental policy issues at the government level and I really like these caribou conversations as well, because I think we're seeing how science in an environmental context is being applied at the regulatory level and that's something that's very interesting to me. And, as someone who's kind of starting out in my career, I see myself being more and more drawn to that world of things because I don't know, you know, as a young person, you feel like you have the weight of the responsibility in some aspects of being the change that you want to see in the world. So, yeah, hopefully, hopefully my generation will, when we take the reins, we'll step up and kind of start hopefully moving the needle on some of these issues.



Janet Sumner: 3:17

Yeah, I hope so and hopefully my generation can keep trying to do some of the stuff that we need to do, because we need to hurry up and catch up. But that was a kind of a leading question. I know that Kaya is very interested in the regulations and policies and how they are supposed to give life to the science or help the light the science be implemented. So we're going to dive in now with Anna in our second episode and actually you know I might be remiss we might have done more than four episodes, and the reason I say that is because if you look back to the Honorable Harvest or how David Flood talks about things, he really speaks from an indigenous perspective, and so you not only have our federal and provincial laws, but you also have indigenous laws and how indigenous people are harvesting or not harvesting and how they interact with the natural world. So we have the science, we have indigenous worldview and indigenous laws and, in fact, indigenous science or indigenous knowledge, and we also have the policy framework. So there's probably at least six episodes of material if you want to learn a lot about caribou, and you can check all of that out on our podcast page. But Anna's going to dive into the role of the federal government and how section 63's under the Species at Risk Act could work to encourage provinces to act. And the reason that I say it could work is because if they were used as they should be, to point out where caribou habitat is not protected or not effectively protected in each of the provinces, giving every six months it's supposed to sort of publish a report that says that¹. And that's kind of a way to sort of push provinces to take action, Because after all, the federal government doesn't want to be taking action on provincial land. They'd really like it if the provinces stepped up and did it. So that's what a section 63 report's supposed to do. Anna's going to talk a lot more about that. We're going to dive into it and you'll get to hear how these policy frameworks are sort of rolling out across the country.

Kaya Adleman: 5:27

Yeah, I'm excited for listeners to hear the last part of this conversation that we had with Anna, so let's get into it.

Janet Sumner: 5:40

¹ edit: the legal test of section 63 of the [Species at Risk Act](#) is to report on whether critical habitat is protected or not. Effective comes into the safety net order of section 61.



Yeah. So I want to take Anna back to before you join us Again. I did this little project on the federal Species at Risk Act and I'm going to just lay out some broad strokes and then, Anna, you can put more detail to it, but essentially under the Species at Risk Act, as Anna said, everybody was excited because when it came out it was like going to be this game changer, and one of the game-changing things was going to be is it was actually going to create these reports. You've decided a species isn't endangered and so governments across Canada, you're required to put plans in place on how to protect them and protect their habitat. So the idea was you would release this information and it would be put out there and the federal government would have to assess whether or not they were adequately protected after a certain amount of time. And in that juncture Canada was supposed to be putting out these reports saying, hey, it's protected in a species I don't know, whatever species in Quebec is adequately protected but not in Manitoba. Or the species in British Columbia is fully protected but it's not in New Brunswick, or something like that. So they would put out these reports and they were supposed to do them every six months and give you kind of a heads up. Hey, heads up Province X, y and Z. You got to pick up your game here because these three provinces are doing a good job and you haven't stepped up to the table. And it was meant to sort of kind of push them all to do a better job. And then, at the end of like three or four reports of saying hey, you didn't do a good enough job, they were meant to come out and say, okay, well then it's time for the federal government to step in with its powers and say we now have to protect the habitat because you're not doing it. And so that was how it was supposed to be done. Again, big fanfare, everybody cheered, the new species at risk act, and we heard crickets, crickets. There were no reports. No, was it? Section 61? Reports Three.

Anna Baggio: 7:46

Section 63,. Section 63, critical habitat reports, yep.

Janet Sumner: 7:49

So those did not come out for more than 10 years and when we approached them the answer was it would cost too much money. Janet, do you know how much this would cost? This would cost us millions of dollars and so many people talking. You know it. Just, it would be impossible for us to do Section 63 report across the country. It would break the bureaucracy, it would break the public service. We wouldn't be able to do it. So Anna could you pick up from that frame and just talk a little bit about what you



decided to do? This little side project that you had, that we had pretty much no funding for. But you decided on a little side project.

Anna Baggio: 8:38

And just to clarify for your listeners. So species at risk is a shared responsibility in Canada, so we have the federal government and the provincial governments and the territorial governments have to work together, and they all committed in 1996 to have complementary legislation so there would be effective protection for species across the whole country. So even if the provinces were to take action first under their jurisdiction, they would have complementary legislation with the federal act, and so that's the underlying approach, the philosophy Built into the Species at Risk Act federally, once the recovery strategy is done for a species and it identifies critical habitat, there was this incredible and really important reporting mechanisms that were supposed to be about accountability and transparency, and you would produce a report on whether or not critical habitat is protected. And so the recovery strategy for boreal caribou came out in 2012, and it's now been five years and we still don't even have a critical habitat report, progress report. And so I worked with two fabulous lawyers, Lara Tessaro and Anastasia Lintner, and a law student, this great law student from Osgoode, and the four of us were going to pump one out, these critical habitat reports². We were going to sit down and we said you know what? Canada keeps telling us? They can't do it, we're going to pump one out and show them that we can do it on a shoestring budget, and so I'm grateful to Osgoode for giving us an internship with the student, and these two lawyers lent their expertise. And then Wild Lands League published the [first critical progress report](#) on critical habitat protection for boreal caribou in Canada, and we looked at all the jurisdictions and we assessed by jurisdiction whether or not their laws provided mandatory and enforceable protection for caribou critical habitat. And then we published it and we put it and we went into the federal government and we said, okay, here you go, federal government. You said it couldn't be done and it was going to cost millions of dollars and it was going to break you. Here you go. We just wrote one for you and it took us six months. How do you like them, apples?

Janet Sumner: 10:55

² Acknowledgements and thanks as well to Jacqueline Hebert, who worked on the progress report through the Victor Internship in Environmental Law and Osgoode Hall Law School.

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I'm a student and three people.

Anna Baggio: 10:58

And you know what? And that report still stands up today. I mean, if you want to know how your jurisdiction is doing on boreal caribou, you can read it. We've laid it out. It's very clear. And so those accountability mechanisms were built in. And, of course, our colleagues at CPOS did a lawsuit against Canada for failing to do these reports and eventually won, and we provided supporting evidence. And so those reports are supposed to be like reporting back to Canadians about whether or not habitats protected and reporting and giving you an objective look about whether or not your jurisdiction is actually doing the job it's supposed to be. And they're kind of meh, the reports now that Canada does these reports, and they're kind of like, they're not very good and I think they're a little bit too differential to the provinces, and so we're still failing to kind of alert Canadians to the fact that these provinces and territories aren't getting the job done and they've been failing for so long that now it's 2024. You know, the recovery strategy first came out in 2012. Habitat needed to be protected within six months. It's now been more than a decade and the provinces are failing. And so now we need Canada to do something extraordinary and actually use its laws and step in and protect habitat in Ontario using the Species at Risk Act, because Ontario has pretty much said we're not doing it and that's how it's supposed to be. Canada's supposed to step in and so we need them to step in, and so this federal cabinet. I hope that they really strongly consider that in this coming spring because hopefully there'll be another recommendation go to cabinet that says you know what? They're failing to protect habitat, and this is the third time we've come to you. I think I'm hoping the cabinet will step in and say yep, it's time we do something. Our reputation as a country is on the line here. Like, how long are we going to let our biodiversity get hammered for logging and mining and roads and all this other stuff?

Kaya Adleman: 12:49

So hey, are you liking *The Clear Cut* as much as we like making it? Your donation helps us bring more of these important stories to life. You can actually support our work by going to our website, www.wildlandsleague.org/theclearcut, or you can click the link in the episode description below. Your support means the world to us. I was going to ask if you could maybe, I guess, flush that out further. We talked about when the environment minister released those statements saying that he was going to make a recommendation to cabinet. Right, that was a while ago. I think we'd mentioned it briefly



on our podcast in one of the episodes at the end of one of our episodes, but maybe you could flush that out a little bit more.

Anna Baggio: 13:45

Yeah, so the federal minister, Minister Guilbeault, you know, to his credit, he had a. He has a responsibility and an obligation to make a recommendation to cabinet when habitat remains unprotected. And so he looked at [Ontario](#) and [Quebec](#) and pretty much concluded that, yep, the habitat remains unprotected and then said made this recommendation to cabinet. There's been that's the second recommendation. There was another one in 2020. Obviously, cabinet then can have all their deliberations and then decide what to do. But that recommendation is really important that it happens. And so there's, you know, cabinet has stepped in to take action in cases of an emergency with the chorus frog, and so there are times it does it, but it's been rare. It needs to be normalized so that the provinces know that if they're not going to get the job done, that Canada's going to step in, and then hopefully, it'll just give an incentive for the provinces to be like, oh, we don't want Canada stepping in, we're just going to do it ourselves. And so that's where I'm hoping we get to. And yeah, so, minister, you both made a recommendation last year. The cabinet didn't act on it. Obviously, we disagreed with that cabinet and that cabinet should have acted, but hopefully we get a different outcome this year.

Janet Sumner: 15:08

Yeah, and it's the way it's supposed to work right. Again, you have these early warning signals. They come out supposedly on a regular basis, these section 63 reports that tell you how a province is doing and really it's just supposed to measure is it effectively protective and adequately protected, yes or no?³ When they produce these reports now it's kind of like, well, they've got this process and they're really working hard on this and they're doing. There's a lot of flowery stuff in there, ingredients around all the processes that provinces are doing, and it kind of buries the lead on whether or not they're protected or not. So kudos to Minister Guilbeault for standing up and basically making the recommendation, despite all the flowery language in these reports. But he took his job seriously and his duty seriously and he made that recommendation. Now he made

³ edit: the legal test of section 63 of the [Species at Risk Act](#) is to report on whether critical habitat is protected or not. Effective comes into the safety net order of section 61.



the recommendation on Boreal Woodland Caribou. Has he made it more than once, or was it a previous minister who did that? Previous minister Right. So it was, I think, minister Wilkinson, when he was in Minister Guilbeault's seat, and so we've seen two successive ministers now make a recommendation to cabinet that Boreal Woodland Caraboo are not adequately protected in Ontario, certainly in Quebec. Now they've also made that. So we're waiting to see. That's where we are right now. We're waiting to see what they could do.

Anna Baggio: 16:32

Yeah, and I think maybe just to kind of for your listeners. So I go into like a lot of these stakeholder committees, been into a lot of them, and we run into a lot of opposition and I'll be honest, like there is a lot of denial out there, there's a lot of industry, a lot of industry. Certainly the regressive ones they'll be like Caribou aren't in trouble, or they'll say that they're not the source of the problem. And then there's also the argument of, well, it's too expensive, it's gonna cost too much. And then after a while they argue well, it's too late, you know what, they're gone, we can't bring them back. And so all of these arguments are thrown at us and I've now heard them for more than 20 years and this is the problem I keep hearing them over and over again. Then the other part of it that happens is that they often vilify us. Right, they often attack us like we are, and not just me. I have other colleagues too from other organizations, but a lot of us we have been on the receiving end like we are vilified, and that's part of their strategy is if you don't like the message, you attack the messenger, and so this is all part of a denial campaign to prevent the government from actually taking steps to recover the species, and so kudos to the climate colleagues for identifying this first, and now, unfortunately, it's migrated to wildlife and species at risk, because they are using the same strategies here to prevent governments and to sow enough doubt and uncertainty that nothing will ever change, and so that's also something we're up against, and so we're gonna need our governments to figure out what they're there for, and if they're just gonna be echoing the industry interest, that's not acting on behalf of all their citizens, that's just advocating for a very small sector, and so this is part of the reason why we also need groups like Wildlands League to continue to kind of raise the alarm and sound the alarm, because we're being outnumbered. They have the voice of government right now.

Janet Sumner: 18:37



Yeah, I just wanna break what you were saying down a little bit because, well, our interest is in having healthy ecosystems that support life, so life can thrive and that's all life. And that's just a very sort of general description of what we do. But a healthy forest, a forest that is vibrant and is robust, is good, not just because we want it, but is good because there are local communities who depend on it, there are First Nations and there are other industrial sectors. So we know for a fact that when we've gone in to do forest management planning, sometimes you're in there having a conversation about forest management planning but it's actually going to really impact the remote tourism operator or it's really going to impact the people who are doing fishing in the area or people who rely on getting country foods from the forest and all of those ingredients are not part of the equation when you're having a conversation about forestry, because the license to take has been handed over to these companies on a large scale and the other interests are kind of treated as not important or sidelined. So it is for us about the health of the forest, but for many others who are invisible in this process, it is also about their livelihoods.

Anna Baggio: 20:15

Yeah, I mean we get calls, as you know, from remote tourism operators that are like please help me, they're about to clear cut all the way up to our backyards. And we get calls from remote tourism operators, we get calls from indigenous peoples. They really do feel like they have nowhere else to go and that they and this is why I take the calls I take all the calls and sometimes I can help and sometimes I can't. But that's partly what we offer and we've developed enough an expertise over many, many years on that process that at least we can give them some advice if we can't do more.

Janet Sumner: 20:51

Can we? I don't know if you can make a comparison between that and mining tenure, right? So it's basically the presumption of the tenure and it probably comes back from a very old time. This way that tenure is handed out, and it's handed out with disregard for First Nations, it's handed out with disregard for other land users and they're given priority and preference on the landscape. So, whether it's forestry or mining or what have you, there is this way that tenure is handed out, and these are actually our forests, they actually belong to Canadians and First Nations, right Like the and so yeah, that's just a bit shocking of a realization.

THE CLEAR CUT

Anna Baggio: 21:37

Well, you know, and I don't know how many people. So, part of when I was doing my masters, I was in Costa Rica looking at land use, and part of it was to look at why certain forests, these tropical rainforests, had disappeared over a very short period of time. And as I was doing that research, not only did I interview local farmers and scientists and community groups, but I also looked at a bit of the history of deforestation in Costa Rica. And when you look back on it and you know, more than a hundred years ago, the policy was you could only prove ownership if you cleared the land. And so you know, for so there was these policies that were driving people to clear those tropical forests, because that was the way you could prove ownership. And you kind of, I looked at that and you kind of go, oh my God, that just seems crazy. Why would they have such a crazy policy? And you know, and now, of course, Costa Rica is not one of the leaders in the world when it comes to fighting deforestation and protecting lands, and so they've really turned it around. But in some ways I feel like that 1920s Costa Rica situation is like right here in Canada. I'm like people could be looking at us going. Why on earth are you like? Why on earth are you allowing your forest to be cleared so much and destroyed and just handed over to industry? Like what is that? And in some ways, we're no better we have been. Our system has been set up to basically prioritize industrial use first, so it's been handed over to logging first. It's mining is prioritized everywhere. So they definitely want to prioritize mining, which means you can leave it open for mineral claimstaking, drilling, blasting, and so those certainly the mining pieces of the hangover of the free entry system, and that that was from a couple of hundred years ago that they used to just give away the lands for development, and so we have not shifted our frame to be more aligned with our modern values, which is clean water, clean air, climate, reconciliation with indigenous peoples. We're just not. We're not there yet and it is. I mean, I hate to say this because it's my country and I love this country and I love the people here. Okay, maybe not all the people, but I love the people here. Most of the time, except when they send me hate mail. But you know like we could do so much better if we just thought a little bit more about sharing the land, bringing in science, bringing in space for indigenous peoples to have more of a say than just giving it all over to industry. And that is really what we do, and so it is shocking, and so I'm going to move on to the next question.

Listener Question: 24:10

THE CLEAR CUT

I'm going to ask you what is the best way to grow plants? How do you take care of them? And I'm going to go ahead and take a look at the next question. Hi, clear cut. My question is about the places that have already been logged and I want to know if it's better to let them grow back on their own, with whatever plant species do best, or to try and plant trees. We have a lot of temperature and rainfall. Thanks so much.

Dave Pearce: 24:41

Hello, clear cut, it's Dave Pearce, Senior Forest Conservation Management, wildlands League and my.... Personal assessment of the situation is and I think it's a fruitful area for conversation, given climate change is that it should be regenerated in the quickest way to get forests back on the site, and we should rely on natural regeneration if possible. If the species that is well suited to that site are coming back in a healthy way, then let that natural regeneration happen. If things aren't being regenerated properly, for whatever reason, I think some form of artificial regeneration is appropriate to get trees started. Now some people are of the opinion that planted forests isn't a natural forest and you have to wait for the next generation for it to be a truly natural forest. But I think in an era of climate change and biodiversity challenges, I think getting trees back on the site as quick as possible is probably a good move, and it's tricky to try to predict what's going to happen with climate change and the idea that maybe we should be planting more southern species or sort of edge of range species and I think having a good variety of trees to kind of hedge your bets on climate change is a good strategy, as long as within sort of the natural range of variation for the site. We don't want to get too crazy about bringing trees that are currently outside their natural range because there's quite a bit of, I think, resilience within species I mean white pine and there's genetic differences, but the species white pine grows all the way down to Mexico, admittedly in high elevations, so it's quite plastic and quite resilient. And even jack pine you know, you get jack pine growing quite far south in Michigan, for example, on dry sites, and black spruce in very wet sites where nothing else will grow, will grow as far as southern Michigan. So there's quite a bit of elasticity and within species, I think, to adapt and change climate change. Now, of course it depends on what you do with those trees after. It depends on the purpose of the site. If there to be remain as a untouched forest in perpetuity, it'd go one way. But if this forest is meant to compensate and stay in the commercial forest realm and sort of compensate for areas that we shouldn't go into, that are already intact, then you might do some thinning to try to encourage the trees to grow to maturity and to be a merchantable size ahead of time. But I think any strategy to get trees back on the site quickly is probably a good one. The trees that are well suited



to that site. You know, if it's a conifer dominated site, then it should be planted mostly conifer, regenerated to mostly conifer. If it's a naturally hardwood good hardwood site, then it should be regenerated to the appropriate species.

Kaya Adleman: 28:17

So the policies that are guiding these industry-first attitudes towards development, those are holdovers, I guess. So the free entry system was in Canada like anyone could come and develop a resource with the government's permission, basically.

Anna Baggio: 28:38

Yeah, and encouraged by the government, and so we have that kind of vestige still there. And when you want to make changes, god bless the industry, because the sky falls every time somebody wants to make a change. Anytime you want to improve something, the sky is gonna fall. I can't tell you how many meetings I've been in where we're talking about putting forward thoughtful solutions that could make a difference for people, make a difference for the environment, and they're like the sky is gonna fall, you're ruining my industry. And I'm like, oh my God, I've heard this now for 20 years. I'm like people, the sky did not fall, we can do this, but we can't do it if the government doesn't have a backbone. The government needs to be able to say it's gonna govern on behalf of all of us If it's only gonna govern on behalf of the industrial interests. That's what it feels like right now is that we have a government that's rewriting laws to drive through development, to consider the environment as red tape that needs to be cut and to speed everything up, and so that's kind of our challenge is that we've like things have just really been, things have been really tilted. Right now that we have this like government stepping on the scales to really align with whether it's a commercial interest or an industry interest.

Janet Sumner: 29:50

And when you say government, which government Are you talking provincially? Are you talking federal?

Anna Baggio: 29:54

Provincial right now, provincially just is. The weight of everything that this Doug Ford government has done in the last number of years is just heavy, heavy, heavy. And you



know, kudos to the people that fought for the Greenbelt, including some people in our office, and got the, got that reversed, but they obviously haven't learned their lesson. We're still there's full steam ahead on other crazy ideas, and so we just have to keep standing up and we have to keep saying these things over and over again, because they want to outlast us, they want us to get eventually get exhausted and they want us to be quiet, but we can't. We have to keep sounding the alarm.

Janet Sumner: 30:37

So, so let's, let's take this forward. So we know that the current system is not working. What, if any, hope do we have? I know that we've got some I'm trying to think of policies that could go the right way, and if they did go the right way, they might produce some kind of a result. So if you were looking for something that could go the right way, what would that be?

Anna Baggio: 31:03

So I see hope. I allow myself to wallow just for a couple of days, that's it. Then I pull up my bootstraps and I go and I keep on fighting again. So you have to do that. But what I where I see hope is number one. There are progressive industries that want to do the right thing and they need to be certified under some type of certification system, like like a forest stewardship council system, so that they can sell their product and get a premium for it and unless their consumers know that that that product came from a responsibly sourced operation. So I see hope there. I mean, could that system be improved? Yes, but there is hope there when you have an industry that wants to do the right thing. I see hope coming from Indigenous peoples who are declaring Indigenous protected areas, and a lot of these Indigenous protected areas overlap with the Habitat of Endangered Species and so if we can just give room for that and encourage our governments to start implementing those and respecting those Indigenous protected areas, we could go a long way. And I get hope from scientists and I get hope from regular people and I get hope from regular people who stop me on the street and they just say, oh Anna, thank you for what you do. You really. You know you're helping us, you know you make a difference and they just keep going. And so anytime someone says, anytime someone calls me, and they just care, they energize me and hopefully I can give them something back. But that's where I get hope from the people care Scientists keep going, indigenous leadership and progressive industry, and I think we



have to persevere on this one. This one's, this one's hard. We have to keep persevering but it can be overcome. We just can't predict when, but it will. It will change.

Janet Sumner: 32:50

It's kind of like people said the green belt wouldn't change but it did, and so it's maybe a longer campaign. As you said, we've been at this since 2002, trying to get well, 2012, trying to get the Care Rehab Attack protected. But there is a decision point coming up and if you're listening to this, we're recording this in just beginning of February 2024. And that decision point is last year. Minister Guilbeault took a recommendation to cabinet that, or recommendation that he done an assessment on whether or not Care Rehab was effectively protected in Ontario and Quebec and he said no, it's not and I recommend you do some protection, and cabinet decided to. I think at the time I was quoted as saying Canada blinked and and they allowed Ontario to continue and they gave them some funding and said, okay, we're going to trust that you can do this because you're telling us you've got a process, you're going to try and get this done, and so they were supposed to be working on this process to get it done and they've had a year to do that. I haven't seen there's been no announcements that have crossed my desk sort of saying, hey, caribou habitat is protected. So I'm assuming we still haven't seen caribou habitat protected, because the default from our position has been that Ontario is saying we've got a dynamic caribou habitat schedule and we're going to move habitat around and we're going to figure something else out and we're going to manage or mitigate, or the other thing is, our caribou don't require 65%, even though the science clearly says that they're doing everything but protecting habitat. So Minister Guilbeault was faced with another challenge. Is that correct, Anna?

Anna Baggio: 34:33

Yes, and I would just say and this is me, Anna Baggio, reaching across the airwaves to all those cabinet ministers that are sitting on that table Minister Wilkinson, Minister Freeland, Minister Leblanc, all of you there, you know working so hard. You're the most powerful people in the country. Caribou need you. Please step up this spring. It's now been four years since you've had recommendations across your desks. Please step up this spring and protect some habitat in Ontario. We need you. It's time and Ontario's not doing it and, in fact, they're going to keep promoting logging and mining.



Janet Sumner: 35:11

So please do it. It's been more than 12 years. So, yeah, let's get something done and not just watch extinction happen. That would be really great. And again, it's not just about a single species. It's about taking care of the forest and the boreal woodland. caribou, give us a proxy, if you will, or help us choose how to better manage. And yeah, and I'm just going to maybe just riff a little bit, one of the reasons that we want this to happen is not just because we want the federal government to issue this, call out or this protection, but we hope what it does is energize the system to go. Like Anna said, at best, you know, provinces will wake up and go oh, I don't want the federal government to come in here and do this. So if they do that, then all of a sudden it creates a much more dynamic and creative space for companies and governments to say OK. So then what's the solution? How do we put a solution together so that Canada doesn't need to step in here and stop fooling ourselves and papering over the problem? And Anna and I have sat at many, many, many tables with industry and we have been shocked and surprised and delighted that in many of those situations we've been able to walk away where our industry is going. You know what I think I can do 300,000 hectares here. I think we can keep 700,000 hectares off the logging block. So and I know personally that I worked on a caribou plan in Northeast Alberta that's still being upheld. So, industry, if they're challenged and they want to work on this and they want to avoid some superimposition by a federal government, then things can get done. And we need to stop looking at the lowest common denominator and say how do we start to reach for those and be there with those who want to actually contribute and make plans so that we can protect. And again, it's not about shutting down industry, it's about actually finding the solutions. And that, to me, is what is advanced by creating this space. And it has to come like you have to have some hard rules, you know, otherwise everybody drives it over 150 kilometers an hour on the highway. So you have to have some hard rules that make people go oh, I got to slow down, right, not just their own personal safety.

Kaya Adleman: 37:42

I mean, why have laws if they don't have any teeth right?

Janet Sumner: 37:46



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Kaya Adleman: 38:03

You can also become a supporter by going to our website at www.wildlandsleague.org/theclearcut and also make sure to leave us a review on your favorite podcast streaming platform. It would really help the podcast.

Anna Baggio: 38:21

And that's where we are right now. We have an endangered species act that isn't actually saving endangered species and you know what? And may I just give a quick shout out to? There are some civil servants within the government right now that are trying really hard to put forward solutions that might make a difference for caribou and at least that are based on science, not like what's coming forward in the policy, like they're. They're putting forward things that are based on science and that might work, and they're obviously being shot down. But please keep going. We need those voices to be heard, and so so, for example, the [Auditor Generals report](#) that came out, I think, a couple years ago, on species at risk. Civil servants identified when this government brought in the permanent exemption from logging from the Endangered Species Act, the civil servants said it will have a significant adverse effect on at least 12 species, including boreal caribou. So their own advice, their own scientists, are warning them that their actions are harmful. The Auditor General has also said you're facilitating development, you're facilitating harm to species. So we have enough of the, the, the. The evidence is there now. We know we're off track, we know we've gone. Well, we're not even on the tracks anymore. I'm not sure we can see the tracks, but we can fix this and but somebody. We need those voices to keep coming and then, hopefully, combined with our voices and others, we will have something different. And then we can kind of tell Canadians that boreal caribou didn't wink out on our watch.

Janet Sumner: 39:59

Lovely. When you say auditor general, you mean the federal auditor general, but no, the provincial one. The provincial one.



Anna Baggio: 40:07

She unveiled a lot. It was very, very really, I you know, illuminating. But those kudos to those people on the inside that are obviously being muzzled and shot down, but keep going. We need you and and hopefully we can turn this around.

Janet Sumner: 40:25

Yeah, we see you and we applaud you. That's, that's a hard job to be inside the machine and have the machine be antagonistic to your points of view or to your science. So, yeah, big shout out. So we're going to be watching that this spring to see if cabinet does take that seriously. We think that that will produce a more productive conversation table that we can actually get to some outcomes. And again, as we've pointed out, it's not monolithic. We don't have industry just all being bad. We don't have civil servants all being, you know, one sided or whatever We've got. We've got the good brains out there that can work on these solutions. And I speak from experience because I have developed solutions in so many different parts of this country where we had willing people who wanted to do great things, and so we just need to actually be given the space to get those done, and then I think we can turn the tide on care. But that's that's where I get my hope, because I still think the solutions are out there.

Kaya Adleman: 41:27

I have another question for Anna.

Kaya Adleman: 41:30

what can listeners of the podcast who aren't federal ministers or civil servants due to maybe move the needle on care policy?

Anna Baggio: 41:42

So, if you're listening, thank you, thank you for listening. You're listening to some of the most original and interesting innovative content in the country right now when it comes to forests. So just learn a bit more. If you are so desired, please pick up the phone and call your MPP and just let them know you want to see caribou habitat protected. So if you're in a particular province, pick up the phone. Every, every jurisdiction needs help,



every single one. If you want to, you know. If you want to support, if you want to support the science, you know, read a little bit of the reports. Read those COSEWIC or the committee on the status of endangered wildlife in Canada. There's these [reports](#) put out. You can read what the science says. This is. It is a fact that caribou are declining. It is a fact that they need habitat. This is not in dispute. And so tell your friends, you know, get involved, follow us and and just get the conversation rolling that that things can be done and we expect our governments to take action.

Janet Sumner: 42:56

Yeah, definitely speak to your members of Parliament, speak to your provincial members as well, because we have an Ontario species Endangered Species Act that should not have these broad based industrial exemptions, so they could fix that too. And I think you know there's just educating other people and sharing the podcast and we will have a lot of information in the show notes and information about all the different campaigns. And there are many groups and this is I would not. I don't think that there's an environmental group out there that doesn't think caribou protection is a high priority. There are all the groups that are working on forestry, are thinking about our forests and the health of our forests, are committed to this and trying to see this through, and we certainly are and are pushing for this. So we'll keep you updated. We've actually had some good conversations around this. In terms of forestry, fsc is the only forest certification system that actually requires you actually plan for caribou, etc. So it's a big reason. And then if you're out shopping and you see that you have a choice between an FSC product or a non FSC product, please choose FSC. Or if you don't see FSC products, ask the store manager hey, when are you going to start getting some FSC products and if you're a buyer, ask for FSC products. So I would say that that's the only certification system that has free, prior and informed consent and that's respecting the rights of indigenous people, and the only certification that actually requires you do a caribou plan and do it better than what the government like, more than meet the government standard. So this is actually all really important things that you can do and, as Anna said, there's lots of ways that you can follow the issue and find out more, and we'll have more information on our show notes, etc. Yeah, and if you're out of, the country, which I know.

Anna Baggio: 44:49



You have a lot of listeners that are outside of Canada. Please send us a note and send our government a note. Feel free to like lambaste the governments over here. We're happy to let them know that you're upset by what you're hearing and then let your wallet do the talking. So don't buy those products that are going to be sourcing from caribou habitat. Find alternatives, whether you're getting recycled content like fully recycled content, that would be helpful. Fsc, like Jenna talked about, and demand better. That you can like. We can demand better as consumers too. I mean, I do it in my life as a policy expert, but we can also do it through our website, Through our wallets and our purchasing. So, yeah, but thank you, and thank you for caring. That's the other thing. Thank you for caring.

Janet Sumner: 45:39

Yeah, yeah, we really appreciate you coming on the ride with us and listening to this. Obviously, caribou conservation is a big issue for us and something we care deeply about. Kai, do you want to weigh in on any of this or do you have any concluding remarks? Or it was hard to see and it's passion today it was really. you know, it's kind of covered up. She was so muted.

Kaya Adleman: 46:00

Yeah, she's just. You know, she didn't bring the energy at all, you know.

Janet Sumner: 46:04

I know it was kind of sad really. That's just gonna channel Mama Baggio, you know it's gonna be a little bit more, you know yeah.

Kaya Adleman: 46:12

Dynamic? Yeah, no, but I it does. I think it does frustrate me. Well, I guess I knew about this before, but it's frustrating to see yet again another example where we have the regulation and the ingredients in place which is something that we've talked about on this podcast before and then there's just no follow through. So I think it is very important that we're keeping the work going, keeping people informed and, you know, spreading the message. We have this legislation for a reason and we need to continually improve it and make sure that it's enforced, right.

THE CLEAR CUT

Janet Sumner: 46:57

Yeah, I think actually you bring up a good point is that for environmental groups, we kind of get all the way to having the legislation. We celebrate it, we tell the government they did a good job and Anna highlighted it at the beginning and then implementation happens and that is where things go to die, because there's a lot of internal forces or inertia that just starts to kill it off. And what we rely on is the white light of public scrutiny and that ability for the public to look at things and go hang on a second. You said you were going to do this and you turned around and did this. So everybody, yeah, we want a dangerous species legislation. Few years goes by and the new provincial government comes in and slips in exemptions, broad industrial scale exemptions. So we need to fire up the public and get them engaged on this, and that's why it's really important for all of you, even if it's individuals and we don't have a big campaign on it or a sustained campaign it's really important for you to be telling your politicians what you think, because that light that you shine, that ability to see through all of the lies and obfuscation, allows governments to kind of go oh, hang on a second, we need to actually maybe do something here. This is not good.

Kaya Adleman: 48:19

We don't like where this is trending, so yeah, thanks for saying that A little call to action is. I think it's insidious that the lack of government effort on these things is kind of based on the expectation that it's just going to float through the news cycle right, because we are being in our current day and age, like constantly inundated with different news items and news articles and the fact that it's it's kind of an expectation, oh yeah, like we've done this, but we don't actually have to follow through on it, because then the next thing is going to come through and the next thing. Don't let that happen. Keep paying attention, because these things slip by.

Janet Sumner: 49:05

And I'm going to let you finish off with something that you're really looking forward to, and it doesn't have to be caribou, and it could be something you know in the ocean. So you know, you go ahead.



Anna Baggio: 49:15

What I'm looking forward to. Yeah, yeah, so well. One thing I am working on when I'm not fighting. I'm not fighting industry to get caribou plans. I am working on a project to protect the ocean and it's being led by Indigenous peoples and in James Bay and Southern Hudson Bay in the proposed Mushkegowuk National Marine Conservation Area, and it's a massive area and it supports beluga whales, polar bears, fish, birds, hemispheric importance for birds. Birds of the hemisphere rely on this area either for breeding or refueling. And the Indigenous peoples have decided that they want to move forward and they will be negotiating something with Canada and hopefully in the next year we'll have something more to point to. But, taking the next step, hopefully in the next month [we'll have a good announcement](#) there that people are ready to take the next step. And, yeah, the world's most southernmost year round population of polar bears that's in our area. So this gives me hope and it's one of my happy projects and you need happy projects to sustain you when you do this work. And yeah, so congratulations to those Indigenous leaders and to all those Indigenous, all the Mushkegowuk on the coast, and hopefully we can get something public with Parks Canada in the next few weeks and that'll be a bit of a boost. And you heard it here the ocean, this ocean protected area, also will protect migratory caribou, because the migratory caribou walk on the ocean floor in the summer and we saw them. We saw 3,000 of them walk on the ocean floor two years ago in the summer. So, and that's a different caribou and that's for another day, but they walked on the ocean floor. They're going to get hopefully get some habitat protection and give something for Canadians to be proud of.

Janet Sumner: 51:17

Yeah, we're pretty excited about it at all. That's like, yeah, thanks, anna, I really appreciate it having this conversation with you and a time to just reflect on some of the work that you've been doing. And, yeah, it's a true pleasure to be working with you in partnership on conservation.

Kaya Adleman: 51:33

Thanks, anna, for being on the podcast. Thank you.

Anna Baggio: 51:36



Kaya. Thank you, Janet, and this is a lot of fun.

Janet Sumner: 51:41

And we are in six continents now, just so you know. The only one we're not on is Antarctica. I put that down to the fact they don't have any forests, but I still have some hope there.

Anna Baggio: 51:52

Hey, there's got to be a research station in Antarctica with internet. Come on people.

Janet Sumner: 51:56

Can somebody send it there, so we can at least have a data point in it.

Anna Baggio: 52:02

Log on, join the internet, check out *The Clear Cut* podcast, get on all continents. So thank you, thank you guys. You guys are doing a great job. Keep going, and I look forward to hearing more about all the different facets of the forest in the next few weeks and months.

Janet Sumner: 52:15

So yeah, thanks very much.

Kaya Adleman: 52:18

Yeah. Well, Janet, I'm sure you found the last part of this conversation with Anna as insightful as I did. I really enjoyed having Anna on the podcast because she is clearly very passionate about the issues that she works on and she really has a sense for people and how to communicate these important issues to people. And, yeah, I think, on the content side of things, I think it is again really interesting that we're seeing a disconnect between what the legislation says it's going to do and then what the actual actions of government are doing, and I think that's something that people should be keeping in mind when we vote, when we write to our representatives. I think this is



again just the theme that we see in the podcast so frequently is that there are tools in place to be able to enact more meaningful change. The federal cabinet can step in and do more to protect caribou in Ontario, and it's something that needs to be done. We've seen from the science it's something that needs to be done and Ontario is clearly not doing it. So, yeah, I'm glad to have this frame for the issue of caribou conservation and I hope other people find it as informative and will be inspired to learn more and be angry, you know, be angry that this isn't happening.

Janet Sumner: 54:06

Yeah, I think it's a good point. I mean, we heard on the science that action needs to be taken, that there are many ranges across the country that are collapsing. And again, going back to that, it's not just like OneLensLeague does not exist because we are an animal rights group or anything like that, but rather caribou are this emblem of ecosystem health. If caribou are doing well in the boreal, then the boreal is doing well, and right now there's a number of the ranges, a good number of them, that are, you know, over the threshold of 35% disturbance or less than the 65% of intact areas and are undisturbed. And yet we've been watching this for more than a decade. And thanks to Anna for doing a big shout out and asking people to speak to their MLAs, their members of parliament. Wherever you are in the country, I would be hard pressed to say there wasn't a caribou range that was in trouble. And these politicians represent you. Have a conversation with them, ask them to take action, because my personal belief is, as more action is taken, then more government start to try to get ahead of this and try to do the right thing. And, frankly, again, it's not just about the health of the ecosystem, it's also about all the jobs that rely on a robust and thriving boreal ecosystem. And forestry is not the only job in the bush. There's jobs on remote tourism, there's jobs in people wanting to be out being active in nature, and so, and even the forestry jobs depend on having the fiber that we say is there is going to be there. So all of this is tied up into caribou, and I'd really like to see the federal government taking more action and all the provincial governments, because it is incumbent upon them to actually do caribou plans, and we haven't seen that. And then the other piece that Anna mentions is it's been a year since Minister Gubbo took a very gladly took a recommendation to cabinet to take action in Ontario. Ontario's been given another year and that year is up, and I still haven't seen any caribou habitat protected. I know that they've been launching studies, etc. But studying is not enough. We're over 12 years past the deadline and we need to start protecting caribou habitat. So, thanks to Anna, another great podcast. Kaya and I know you and I've been doing some interviews.

THE CLEAR CUT

They're not the can, as they say, but they are recorded and Kaya's going to be working her magic over the next week and we've got a couple of really good podcasts coming up for you. Both of them centered around British Columbia and forestry there, and talking about biomass, talking about old growth. So stay tuned for those, because those are going to be really good ones too.

Kaya Adleman: 56:59

Yeah, we're going to the West Coast, buckle up.

Janet Sumner: 57:03

Yeah, exactly.

Kaya Adleman: 57:05

Yeah, and I guess I just also want to add, if you are inspired by this episode, as I was to take action on caribou conservation, Wildlands League has made it very easy for you to [send a letter](#) to your member of parliament, so we are including a link in the episode description for you to do that. And if you're listening outside of Canada, please feel free to email us directly with your thoughts on this issue. We'll compile all of the messages and send them to the governments of Canada and Ontario. Yeah, so you know. If you don't live in Canada we know that many listeners don't please feel free to write in with your thoughts.

Janet Sumner: 57:48

Yeah, thanks very much. And if you're thinking about buying merchandise, we had another couple of lucky buyers on the weekend, some pretty cool swag that we got Two sweatshirts that Kai and I were modeling. I think it was on a couple of the social media platforms. Anyway, feel free to purchase those. I really like mine.

Kaya Adleman: 58:07

Yeah, I'd like to think that that photo of us on socials is what inspired people to go out and buy them.



Janet Sumner: 58:16

So oh, absolutely.

Kaya Adleman: 58:18

I understand yeah.

Janet Sumner: 58:23

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Kaya Adleman: 58:34

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Janet Sumner: 58:55

That's at Wildlands League on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook or LinkedIn, of course.

Kaya Adleman: 59:01

See you next time.