



## Existing Conditions Fact Sheet: Ungulates

Issued: October 2023

The various study areas associated with the Community Access Road contain habitat for ungulate species. Two ungulate species have been identified as Valued Components for the Community Access Road – they are moose / mooz and caribou / atik. Moose and caribou rely on specific habitats for movement, feeding, breeding, and rearing young. Various studies have been completed to understand the existing environment for ungulates. Below is a summary of the results for moose and caribou and their habitat in the various study areas.

### Caribou / Atik

- Boreal caribou are listed as threatened both provincially and federally.
- The various study areas overlap federal and provincial caribou ranges. The Local Study Area (LSA) is mainly in the Missisa range.
- Caribou require large continuous habitats and are negatively affected by loss and alteration of habitat by humans and sensory disturbance.
- The various study areas contain habitat for woodland caribou including peatlands, treed lowlands, and conifer forests.
- Collar studies:
  - 30 adult female caribou were collared in 2021 to be researched. As of March 31, 2023, 19 collars were still active.
  - The collar studies showed that caribou strongly prefer sparse forest and treed bog habitat during all seasons.
  - Caribou avoided deciduous forest, mixed forest, water, and habitats that were disturbed in the last 40 years by forestry, wildfires, pests, or weather.
  - Studies were also completed to understand seasonal movement of caribou and winter habitat use.



### Study Areas

Study areas identify the geographic limit where potential effects of the road may occur. The existing conditions are documented for three study areas:

- Project Development Area (PDA): the area of direct disturbance
- Local Study Area (LSA): the area where direct effects of the road are likely to take place
- Regional Study Area (RSA): the area where indirect effects are likely to occur





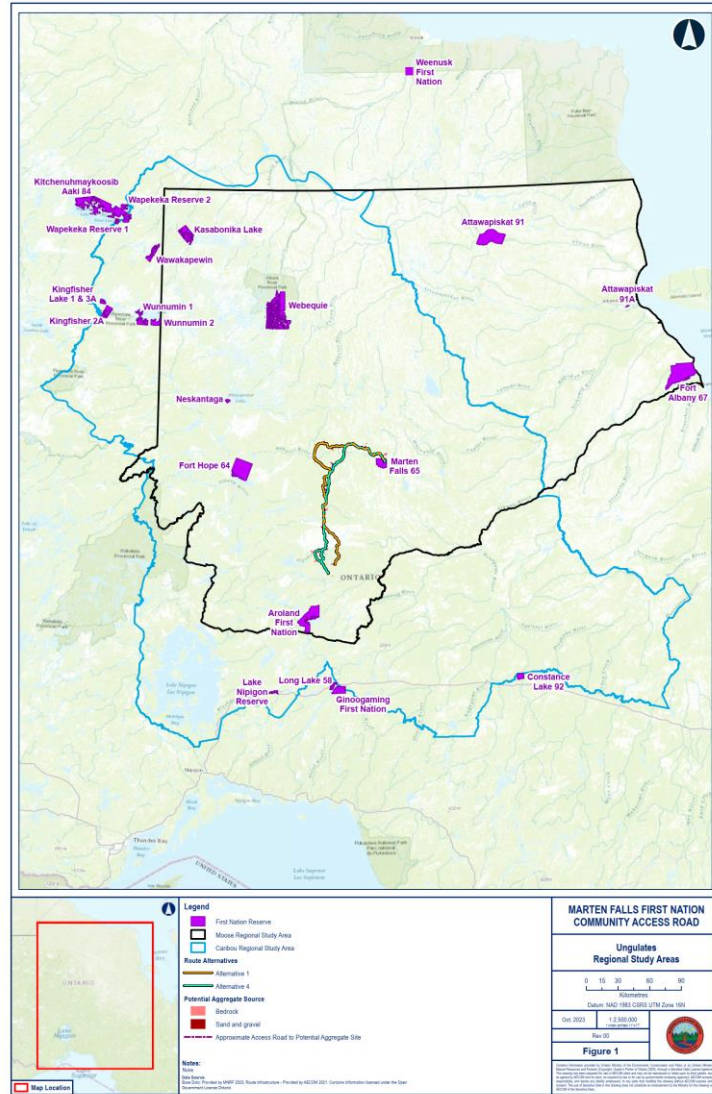
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- Populations have been declining in multiple caribou ranges which overlap the study areas.
- Threats to Caribou:
  - Habitat loss and fragmentation
  - Predation, primarily by wolves, is the main limiting factor to caribou populations. Caribou habitat use is dependent on protection from predation
  - Human disturbance can increase predation by wolves
  - Sensory disturbance due to human activities
  - Loss of suitable habitat due to climate change

## Moose / Mooz

- Moose occur across Canada in boreal and mixed forests and are an important harvest animal for First Nations groups.
- Moose select habitat that seasonally provide them with food and cover from predators and weather including aspen forests, shrubland, treed wetlands, and forests that are 5 to 30 years in age.
- As a result, habitat for moose in the various study areas may have increased due to fires in the last 40 years.





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- Moose are highly mobile and have large home ranges, which allows them to utilize habitat patches in varying landscapes.
- A habitat suitability model and aerial surveys in 2022 and 2023 were used to understand existing habitat use in the study areas:
  - High quality habitat is present in 10% and 5% of the ungulate LSA and moose RSA
  - Low suitability habitats include open bog and fen areas
  - Moose are occupying high quality habitat in the southern portion of the RSA
- Moose populations have been declining in Ontario since the early 2000s, especially in the northern part of their range.
- Moose are negatively affected by roads and increasing traffic volumes.
- Moose densities in the various study areas are managed to be low in support of caribou populations and due to low primary productivity and availability of deciduous and mixed forest stands.

## Contact Information

You are welcome to contact the Project Team at any time with questions or comments.

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